

Urban Action 2004

A Journal of Urban Affairs

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San Francisco State University

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Cover Photo by Elmer Tosta

It is with great pleasure that I invite and welcome you to read the 2003-2004 issue of the Urban Action journal; a journal that has been sponsored and produced by the Urban Studies Program for nearly three decades. The creativity and insights reflected in this year's issue come from an interdisciplinary team of San Francisco State University students; this year's editorial team are majors in Urban Studies, Social Science, and Language. Our writers and contributors come from multiple disciplines across the SFSU colleges.

This year, the journal focuses on what urban environments can and should provide for us, and what we give back to our places. This conceptual framework helps us understand our urban environment in terms of what we give and take from it and how we are a part of it. In this context, the articles are meant to be understood in a highly integrated way, as part of a large picture that describes the complexity of urban life.

I have watched the editorial team develop and grow, as each joined the staff and collectively undertook the process of designing a work schedule, layout and editorial teams, a method for ensuring that the articles would be of the highest quality, and solicitation of articles, poetry and artwork from the student body of San Francisco State University. This journal represents nine months of work, from collecting solicitations to developing the layout design and putting the final product together for publication. It has been exciting and inspiring to observe, supervise, and be part of the journal's development. As the journal developed, so too did the student editorial team. Putting together a journal such as this one requires students to work intensively in teams, implement organizational systems, and learn new technologies and software programs.

Thus, you may imagine how wonderful it feels to see the journal completed and to present it to you. The journal issue, like other issues before it, tackles important urban concerns, raises meaningful questions about urban life and city planning, presents solutions to urban problems, and provides a voice for people interested in cities. Enjoy it, learn from it, share it with others, and if you are a student at SFSU, please think about contributing to future issues. This journal may also be accessed on the SFSU BSS homepage on the Internet.

Finally, congratulations and much thanks to the 2003-2004 editorial team and to the authors, poets and artists whose work is featured in this issue.

Professor Raquel Pinderhughes

Urban Studies Program, Urban Action Faculty Advisor

May 2004

We are extremely proud to present to you the 2003-2004 issue of Urban Action. The creation of this journal was accomplished by a small staff over food and coffee (and carrot juice) in one of the most unusual and urban of American cities: San Francisco. All of our staff lives, works, and attends school here. Our circumstances may vary but we are united in and by our urban environment, by guiding the future of this environment and by taking its bounty.

This journal reflects what we give and take from our urban environments. We consider what our urban places give us: shelter, places to work, places of commerce. From there, we look at what we take from the urban realm: food, culture, learning, and understanding. Finally, we look at the intersection of giving and taking: public transportation, business, and conflicts about the future of urban life. We have included amongst the articles postcards from urban areas around the globe, written by San Francisco State University students and faculty to give us a perspective on the world. We attempted to make this journal as friendly to nature as possible- using recycled paper, printing with soy ink, and minimizing the amount of sheets.

We'd like to acknowledge that food played a large part in the production of this journal, as we met every Tuesday morning in a café in San Francisco and toiled over plates and cups. We'd like to thank Ayse Paumk, Urban Studies Professor, for providing much assistance on technical matters and the webpage; the Urban Studies Department for sponsoring this journal; Vincent Cheung, Alex Keller, and the staff of the BSS Computer Lab for the software, tech support, and unending patience; and Ly Chau and the BSS Budget Office for processing all of our mountains of paperwork. Very special thanks go to all of the students who submitted articles and contributed to the creation of Urban Action; our most wonderful and dedicated faculty advisor, Raquel Rivera Pinderhughes, who was there for us every step of the way, encouraging the best possible results; and Erin Rodriguez in the Urban Studies office for being a special, boundless and imminently wonderful human being- her help in producing this journal is profound.

We hope you enjoy the journal as much as we enjoyed creating it.

Sincerely,

The Staff of the 2003-2004 Urban Action Journal

Staff and Contributors

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Owen Taylor is an Urban Studies senior who is particularly excited about environmental justice, sustainable practices and developments, urban agriculture/gardening and affordable and livable housing. Worm compost bins, bike lanes and floral prints really float his boat. In the future, he will be a doctor of sustainable urban agriculture.

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491 Bayshore Blvd: The History, Politics and Development of Home Depot in San Francisco

Kevin Kitchingham

THE HISTORY

The Atlanta Based Home Depot Corporation, founded in 1978¹, has made 3 unsuccessful attempts to locate a store in San Francisco prior to their current 4th proposal for a store on Bayshore Boulevard where it meets Cortland Avenue. In 1995, after facing fierce local opposition, the mega-store scrapped plans to develop a Mission Bay store, the first proposal². In 1997, the company sought to locate a San Francisco mega-store at Pier 80³. Though Former Mayor Willie Brown supported the Pier 80 plan, the deal fell through under community pressure. The 3rd attempt was made at a location with a similar political landscape as that of the present proposal. Visitacion Valley, a predominantly lower income neighborhood, was selected for a 10.3-acre development but was ultimately forced out due to neighborhood grievances; Home Depot pulled out of the Visitacion Valley project in 1999⁴. The 4th attempt is currently in Draft EIR stage and is to be located at 196 Loomis Street / 491 Bayshore Boulevard where Bayshore Boulevard

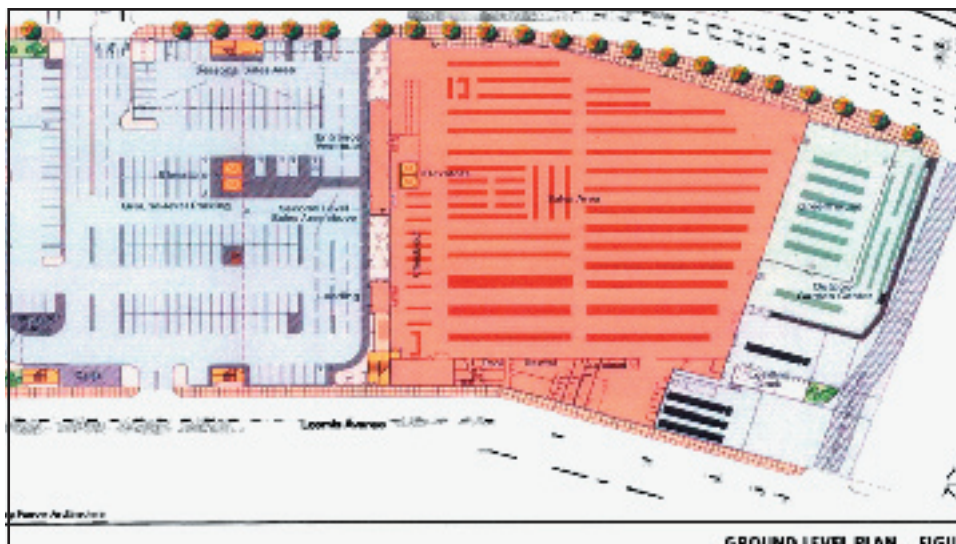
and Cortland Avenue meet. The site is currently composed of two abandoned warehouses, one of which is a former hardware store.

THE PROPOSAL

Home Depot has proposed the development of a 153,089-sq. ft. home improvement center at 196 Loomis Street/491 Bayshore Boulevard in San Francisco. The development would replace two vacant warehouses at the intersection of Bayshore Boulevard and Cortland Avenue. The proposed site is within the boundaries of the (Northwest) Bayview Hunter's Point District of San Francisco. It is at the very foot of the Bernal Heights neighborhood, the closest residential development to the project. The area is zoned as M-1 for light industrial development⁶. The zoning also requires that the building be no higher than 65ft. The bulk restrictions, which require that the building be no longer than 250 ft. in length and a maximum diagonal length of 300 ft., would only apply if the proposed structure were over 40 feet in height⁷. However, as the proposed structures

would be less than 40 ft. high the bulk restrictions would not apply. The proposed development, seen in the figure below, seeks to place a 2 story building on the site. The main floor will consume 96,250-sq. ft.⁸

The second floor is measured at 38,405-sq.ft. The garden center is expected to be at 8,546-sq.ft., with an attached greenhouse



measured at 9,888-sq.ft.¹⁰ The home improvement center's plans call for an attached parking garage. The garage, described as "two levels for parking with rooftop parking available," will in actuality be 3 levels¹¹. The garage is designed to hold 550 parking spaces¹². The 101 and 280 freeways serve this corridor via the Alemany and Bayshore Boulevard off- and on-ramps. Home Depot plans to utilize 4 general freight docks for tractor-trailer use in both the long and short haul of supplies. The current estimations call for 15 tractor-trailer and 15 medium capacity deliveries per day.¹³ In addition the Home Depot plans to have a "drive-through" customer pick up lane with a designated lane and pick up window.

FITTING INTO SAN FRANCISCO'S GENERAL PLAN

The proposed project is in keeping with a number of elements in the city's General Plan. According to the Draft EIR, the proposed development would intensify the use of the site in a manner generally consistent with the General Plan. It is important to look at what ways the project fits into the plan specifically. The Commerce and Industry Element is met by the project's commercial nature and the fact that it will provide jobs to city residents. It meets the Urban Design Element in that it plans to be in keeping with the area's design features, i.e. light industrial warehousing. It does not seek to exceed any of the height or bulk limitations and is in keeping with the neighborhood's character. The Environmental Protection Element is met by the development in that it plans to promote effective energy management practices and is employing many of the city-mandated energy efficiency policies in construction and maintenance. The project also seeks to accommodate the Transportation Element by providing truck routes for delivery, pedestrian crosswalks at pertinent intersections, necessary off-street parking, and plans to provide off street loading areas for freight and goods. However, whether or not the transportation element is being met seems to be the most contentious area of the EIR. While Home Depot has plans for effective delivery mechanisms and has chosen a site near transportation nodes, the measure of increased vehicle trip impact is unclear. The study reveals

that the traffic generated would bring the surrounding freeway on- and off-ramps to a failing level of service. Overall the project would generate 848 vehicle trips during the weekday PM peak.¹⁴ 409 of these trips would be inbound while 439 would be outbound.¹⁵ The Saturday midday peak (Noon-1pm) would generate about 1,268 vehicle trips, 657 of which would be inbound and 611 outbound.¹⁶ Without improvements to the local transportation infrastructure, lines of traffic will average between 200 and 500 feet at the surrounding intersections.¹⁷ This would be the same for the serving freeway entrances and exits. There are no existing reports of what the levels are at now, making this a very vague area of the study. Traffic will increase but to what exact degree over the previous and present land-use in the area remains unclear. With so little in the way of comparison data these estimates are criticized for seeming to exist in a vacuum.

THE OPPONENTS

Businesses in the area and around the city stand to see their revenue decrease with this development. They are some of the most vocal opponents of the development. Locally owned Cole Hardware fears that their business will be adversely impacted by this development. Four of their establishments stand to lose considerable business to the Home Depot juggernaut. 51-year-old Rick Karp is the president and owner of Cole Hardware.¹⁸ He is a native San Franciscan and bought the franchise from his father, 87-year-old Dave Karp, who started the chain in 1959 on Cole Street. He took over the business in 1977 with about 8 employees. Today the franchise boasts 100 employees. The franchise's location at 3312 Mission Street is the closest hardware store to the proposed development. "Yes, of course I freely admit I am very biased. Home Depot will most assuredly put our Mission Street store out of business," says Karp.¹⁹ The San Francisco Chronicle has dubbed Karp as the most vocal opponent in the city. Cole Hardware belongs to the Ace Hardware Cooperative. Ace serves as a purchasing cooperative and leverages the buying power of the combination of thousands of independent hardware stores. Even with their Ace affiliation, Cole hardware will

just not be able to compete with the purchasing or distribution power of Home Depot.

Locally owned lumber facilities are also in jeopardy, as Home Depot also plans to provide a full service lumber facility at this proposed development. 89-year-old Beronio Lumber voiced its fear over this development. President Mike Cassassa told the San Francisco Bay Guardian in 2002, "Historically, they are fairly predatory; it's certainly got us scared."²⁰ Beronio stands to lose a large revenue stream to a competitor that can easily undercut prices due to their vast distribution network and massive proposed warehouse.

Local building professionals and unionists also stand to lose considerable source of income due to one of Home Depot's stated bases for expansion. Home Depot is a non union employer,²¹ yet it contracts with plumbers, welders, and construction workers to install its products. Local labor professionals are forced to negotiate with a non-union company to acquire work. Home Depot boasts 900 non-union stores across the United States.

The residents of Bernal Heights are also, by and large, against this project. This is apparent in the legislation coming from the neighborhood's District Supervisor Tom Ammiano. San Francisco's neighborhoods have been represented more directly since district elections were made into law again in 1996. After 23 years and 9 city-wide votes, neighborhoods are now empowered with direct representation in government. Bernal Heights is part of District 9. Tom Ammiano is the elected supervisor for that neighborhood. In 2002, Ammiano introduced legislation to require a conditional use permit for retail spaces of more than 50,000 square feet.²² On March 25th 2003 the board of supervisors voted on this revised legislation and the result was 7-4 in favor of the legislation. It was vetoed by Mayor Brown and a veto overturn requires 8 Board of Supervisor votes. 7 votes for the conditional use permit leg-

islation was 1 shy of the amount required for an overturn of an executive veto by the Mayor of San Francisco. Supervisor Ammiano introduced the legislation because he views the establishment of the franchise as setting precedent for the further expansion of other retail outlets in San Francisco such as Wal-Mart.

THE PROPONENTS

Some businesses in the area are reported to be happy with the coming project. They see both spillover economic activity as well as the agglomerative economic benefits of having such a large distributor serving the largest Home Depot in the country right "next door". Seeing as the plans call for a garden center and attached green house it seems that the Floor-Craft garden center on the Northwest Corner of Bayshore and Cortland (directly across the street) will be impacted by this new home improvement center. The Floor-Craft store sees a possible downturn in the beginning but

has openly stated that they think things would eventually pick up. "Hey, we might take a hit for the first month or so when they come in, but our customers are loyal and we provide special service that Home Depot can't, and once they are in, our business will be booming again," said Martin Ward from Floor-Craft.²³ Sophie Maxwell, the District Supervisor for Bayview Hunters Point, is in favor of the project. Maxwell, Gavin Newsom (Cow Hollow, Marina, and Pacific Heights), Tony Hall (Park Merced, West of Twin Peaks) and Geraldo Sandoval (Excelsior, Oceanview, Merced Heights and Ingleside) all voted against Tom Ammiano's legislation. The promise of roughly 300 jobs was enough for Sophie Maxwell to vote for the project's approval. Maxwell needs jobs for her constituents who are traditionally under-employed. Sandoval represents District 11, which includes the southern neighborhoods of the Excelsior, Oceanview, Merced Heights and Ingleside. Sandoval was considered to be the swing vote but has indicated lately that he will

**"Home Depot
will most assuredly put our
Mission Street
store out of
business."**

-Rick Karp

not change his mind, thus keeping a veto override out of reach.

The Executive Branch of City Government also supports this development. Mayor Willie Brown was quoted in 1996 as saying, "We must discourage the encroachment of large chains and outlets which tend to stifle job growth and export dollars out of the community."²⁴ Seven months later, the hardware giant paid Mayor Brown's former campaign advisor, Jack Davis, \$30,000 to meet with the Mayor and "discuss plans and exchange information" regarding a Home Depot for the Port of San Francisco.²⁵ These discussions led to Brown taking a tour of a nearby Home Depot Store. Shortly thereafter Brown became a supporter of Home Depot. Since that initial meeting Jack Davis has been paid \$30,000 every 3 months as a consultant to the corporation.²⁶ By 1999 he had been paid a total \$330,000 for his consultancy. Every fiscal quarter since first summit, Davis has had a meeting with Brown about Home Depot's need for a site in San Francisco.

THE ALTERNATIVES

The Draft Environmental Impact Report has a number of suggested alternative uses for the site. It is important to note that none of the proposed alternatives offer a housing solution or begin to mitigate development with the opposing parties.

Alternative A²⁷ is no project. This is a standard procedure. This alternative is meant to show what impacts will be felt if nothing happens on the site.

Alternative B²⁸ is Variant No Project. This alternative use examines the impact of replacing the existing vacant warehouses with two viable enterprises. Simply, it calls for someone to move

into the empty warehouse spaces and use them as they were used before or for some similar enterprise.

Alternative C²⁹ calls for a 60,000 sq.ft. facility. The existing buildings would be demolished. A single level structure would be erected with 350 parking spaces serving the facility. The facility would still serve the home improvement market. This alternative is deemed to have less impact than the proposed project but would generate a smaller increase in employment. The impact on air quality would be lessened and the project would be in accordance with the BAAQMD's (Bay Area Air Quality Management District) 2015 thresholds. It is considered to be an environmentally superior project.

Alternative D³⁰ calls for a 107,400 sq. ft. facility. This is similar to the proposed project only in that it is roughly 45,690 sq.ft. (about 1/3 of Home Depot's proposal). The ground floor would be about the same size as the original proposal but there would be no second floor or mezzanine. There would still be a greenhouse but it would be reduced to 5,604 sq.ft., as opposed to 9,888 sq.ft. The garden center would also be reduced to

5,500 sq.ft. from Home Depot's 8,546 sq.ft. The parking garage would be on 2 levels and would provide 385 parking spaces, about 165 fewer spots. This alternative still calls for the demolition of the existing structures. The projections for traffic generated by this proposal would still create air quality that would violate 2015 BAAQMD thresholds. The BAAQMD operates a regional monitoring network. The network measures the concentrations of 6 pollutants that significantly contribute to bad air quality. The six pollutants measured are Ozone, Carbon Monoxide, final particulate matter, nitrogen dioxide, and sulfur. Most of these can be attributed to automobile

"We must discourage the encroachment of large chains and outlets which tend to stifle job growth and export dollars out of the community."

-Willie Brown

usage. Air Pollution is a huge concern for this project.

The proposed development of a 153,089-sq. ft. Home Depot store at 196 Loomis Avenue / 491 Bayshore Boulevard, in San Francisco, poses myriad questions when analyzed. There are a number of battles in terms of the politics and land use issues. San Francisco faces an identity crisis in the growth issue that surround this project. Place is everything when it comes to this development. Its location makes it a land use issue rife with contention. The seemingly incorruptible process of providing goods and services becomes an issue of social justice and city politics. At the core of this issue is also the notion that

district planning and politics will be shaped by this debate. Precedent will be set on how border issues are dealt with between districts. The land is within the Bayview Hunters Point District but the environmental impact is on that of the Bernal Heights Neighborhood. Home Depot has been successful so far in playing these two neighborhoods against one another. Regardless of the economic and environmental impacts, this could be the most threatening aspect of this project.

THE FUTURE

It would seem that this project will eventually win approval and be built at the planned site. Home

Depot has shown serious political maturity in understanding where to place this development in San Francisco. The smartest thing is replacing the previous building, a hardware store, with a similar one, a Home Depot. A giant leap is not required to understand why the project should be located there: it does not resonate with the rest of the city's neighborhoods that this development is a harbinger of retail developments to come. Home Depot has been very savvy in pitting a white neighborhood (Bernal Heights) against a black neighborhood (Bayview-Hunter's Point). It is important to note that Supervisor Ammiano's legislation won approval 7-4 and that it lacked but 1 vote to overturn Mayor Brown's veto. Supervisor Ammiano may be able to re-introduce similar legislation aimed at banning further big-box development on the Bayshore Corridor. However, since newly elected Mayor Gavin Newsom won a closely contested election, it would possibly be politics as usual, seeing as he voted against the conditional use legislation. The draft EIR is closed for public comment but those comments have not yet been released. Anything is possible in this ongoing saga. The storm is gathering.

FOOTNOTES

- ¹ Inside Home Depot, Chris Roush, 1999 New York McGraw-Hill Professional
- ² Al Norman; Hometowns Not Home Depot (<http://www.sprawl-busters.com/hometown.html>)
- ³ Al Norman; Hometowns Not Home Depot (<http://www.sprawl-busters.com/hometown.html>)
- ⁴ Al Norman; Hometowns Not Home Depot (<http://www.sprawl-busters.com/hometown.html>)
- ⁵ Draft EIR 491 Bayshore Boulevard, Home Depot (Pg.27); San Francisco Planning Department: 2003
- ⁶ Draft EIR 491 Bayshore Boulevard, Home Depot (Pg.3); San Francisco Planning Department: 2003
- ⁷ Draft EIR 491 Bayshore Boulevard, Home Depot (Pg.3); San Francisco Planning Department: 2003
- ⁸ Draft EIR 491 Bayshore Boulevard, Home Depot (Pg.2); San Francisco Planning Department: 2003
- ¹⁰ Draft EIR 491 Bayshore Boulevard, Home Depot (Pg.2); San Francisco Planning Department: 2003
- ¹¹ Draft EIR 491 Bayshore Boulevard, Home Depot (Pg.3); San Francisco Planning Department: 2003
- ¹² Draft EIR 491 Bayshore Boulevard, Home Depot (Pg.3); San Francisco Planning Department: 2003
- ¹³ Draft EIR 491 Bayshore Boulevard, Home Depot (Pg.42); San Francisco Planning Department: 2003
- ¹⁴ Draft EIR 491 Bayshore Boulevard, Home Depot (Pg.4); San Francisco Planning Department: 2003
- ¹⁵ Draft EIR 491 Bayshore Boulevard, Home Depot (Pg.4); San Francisco Planning Department: 2003
- ¹⁶ Draft EIR 491 Bayshore Boulevard, Home Depot (Pg.5); San Francisco Planning Department: 2003
- ¹⁷ Draft EIR 491 Bayshore Boulevard, Home Depot (Pg.3); San Francisco Planning Department: 2003
- ¹⁸ Jenny Strasberg, "Rick Karp: Protecting mom-and-pop shops...", SF Chronicle: August 27th 2003
- ¹⁹ Jenny Strasberg, "Rick Karp: Protecting mom-and-pop shops...", SF Chronicle: August 27th 2003
- ²⁰ Cassi Feldman, "Home Creepo," San Francisco Bay Guardian November 19th 2002
- ²¹ Inside Home Depot, Chris Roush, 1999 New York McGraw-Hill Professional
- ²² Frank Gallagher, "Ammiano has big stake in big-box ban overturn"; S.F.Examiner April 15th 2002
- ²³ Warren Hinckle, "Waiting on Bayshore"; The San Francisco Examiner May 2nd 2002.
- ²⁴ Al Norman; Hometowns Not Home Depots (<http://www.sprawl-busters.com/hometown.html>)
- ²⁵ Al Norman; Hometowns Not Home Depots (<http://www.sprawl-busters.com/hometown.html>)
- ²⁶ Al Norman; Hometowns Not Home Depots (<http://www.sprawl-busters.com/hometown.html>)
- ²⁷ Draft EIR 491 Bayshore Boulevard, Home Depot (Pg.116); San Francisco Planning Department: 2003
- ²⁸ Draft EIR 491 Bayshore Boulevard, Home Depot (Pg.117); San Francisco Planning Department: 2003
- ²⁹ Draft EIR 491 Bayshore Boulevard, Home Depot (Pg.121); San Francisco Planning Department: 2003
- ³⁰ Draft EIR 491 Bayshore Boulevard, Home Depot (Pg.123); San Francisco Planning Department: 2003

Live/Work Development in San Francisco: A Policy Report

Kimberly Durandet

ABSTRACT

Although San Francisco artists had been living in converted industrial spaces since the 1970s, it wasn't until 1988 when the San Francisco Board of Supervisors passed an ordinance that changed the municipal code (Planning Code) creating a live/work designation. The creation of this new classification of land use legalized the conversion of industrial space in which artists were living. However, during the late 1990s San Francisco experienced an economic boom and venture capital flowed to 'start-up' internet companies. Competition for office space tightened and the new entrepreneurs classified their companies as 'business services' to qualify for cheaper space located in industrial areas. Developers responded to this demand, and the ensuing housing shortage, by using the live/work designation to create new or converted live/work lofts. Rapid development ensued and sparked a controversy with neighborhood residents. Displacement not only of residents, but manufacturing and arts-related businesses, led to a grass roots rebellion against gentrification of the industrial land. These groups succeeded in influencing politics, law, and the urban environment through pressuring the Planning Commission to adopt an industrial protection zone and promoting a popular vote that changed the composition of the Board of Supervisors and the political appointment structure of the Planning Commission and Board of Permit Appeals. The newly elected Board of Supervisors passed a moratorium on all live/work units in the city, and funded a community planning process (currently underway) to rezone the industrial lands so that more housing may be developed. While it is time to release the industrial past and prepare for the next wave of growth, some provisions must be made to keep economic and social diversity

in the populous- perhaps through subsidized planned unit development.

INTRODUCTION

The innovation of a live/work lifestyle in America can be traced to artist Robert Rauschenberg who returned from Europe in 1953 with very little money and in need of a place to live. He rented a loft for ten dollars a month on Fulton Street in New York City that had no heat or running water but twenty-foot ceilings and a lot of space to work (Zukin, 1982). This lifestyle began to diffuse throughout the artist community and by the 1970s and 1980s San Francisco's industrial area was becoming home to artists. A change in political economic interests shifted San Francisco's role as an industrial port city into a global city centered on a service economy (Hartman, 2002; Wolfe, 1999). During the 1970s and 1980s artists moved into vacant industrial spaces and began converting them into live/work studios (Wolfe, 1999). What began as an avant-garde lifestyle for artists spawned a new architectural style; 'industrial chic'. At the same time, a rise in cultural cachet of loft living due to popular media and films like *St. Elmo's Fire (1986)* and *Ghost (1990)*, created a demand for this converted industrial housing lifestyle (Wolfe, 1999; Podmore, 1998; Zukin, 1987). While South of Market (SOMA) and eastern neighborhoods of San Francisco have historically been mixed use with a strong industrial presence, residential use is not permitted in industrial buildings. The 1988 live/work loft ordinance was passed seeking to legalize this living arrangement, preserve a form of affordable housing, and save industrial land from development pressure for office space.

Gentrification, a term coined by Ruth Glass (1964) in London, is classically defined as the

influx of higher class people into a working class neighborhood. The new residents improve their property resulting in a rise in assessed value and subsequent displacement of working class residents. The process of gentrification according to Godfrey (1988) classifies the process into three phases “of bohemian influx, middle-class transition, and bourgeois consolidation.” The initial stage occurs when a sub-culture group moves into an area that is in decline seeking lower rent, personal freedom, and the attraction of like-minded individualists who begin to form the community base. These ‘urban pioneers’ (Stratton, 1977) improve the area and contribute to the perception of livability that then appeals to the middle class. Once the middle class begins to move into the area, capital investment grows to serve the new residents. This completes the cycle attracting even wealthier residents while the original inhabitants and the ‘urban pioneers’ have mostly been displaced. This process has been taking place in San Francisco’s industrial lands in the form of live/work development.

THE LIVE/WORK ORDINANCE

An ordinance creating the live/work designation was passed on August 29, 1988 by the Board of Supervisors and signed by Mayor Art Agnos. The live/work ordinance amended the San Francisco Planning Code to describe and delimit the scope of live/work. Section 102.13 defines live/work as “...a structure or portion of a structure combining a residential living space for a group of persons including not more than four adults with an integrated work space principally used by one or more of the residents...”. But, Section 102.6.7 which defines a dwelling unit, explicitly excludes live/work from this definition. “For the purposes of this Code a live/work unit, as defined in Section 102.13 of this Code, shall not be considered a dwelling unit”. This

“While it is time to release the industrial past and prepare for the next wave of growth, some provisions must be made to keep economic and social diversity in the populous.”

language exempted developers from providing required below market rate unit quota, disabled access, open space, parking, and paying the same impact fees for schools usually required for residential development. Section 102.2 defines arts activities that “...shall include performance, exhibition (except exhibition of films), rehearsal, production, post-production and schools of any of the following: dance, music, dramatic art.... It shall include commercial arts and art-related business service uses including, but not limited to recording and editing services...” The language ‘commercial arts-related business service use’ is what qualified internet start-up companies to lease the live/work spaces. However, when these companies expanded, the increase in the number of employees, and the type of work done

was more closely related to office work than the stated intent of the arts related business service designation.

Growth of new office construction was constrained in 1986 by Proposition M a slow growth initiative that also established ‘Priority Policies’ for amending the general plan. The ‘Priority Policies’ are concerned with preservation of neighborhood economy, culture, character, affordable housing, historic landmarks, and open space. They also address earthquake preparedness, impacts from commuter traffic, transit, parking, and protection of industrial and business service sector (i.e. printing businesses) from commercial office development (Hartman, 2002). The proposed live/work ordinance was reviewed and found consistent with the ‘Priority Policies’ and the General Plan.

No one at the time the ordinance was written in 1988 could have predicted the dot-com boom and its subsequent effect on this provision to the Planning Code. In their analysis city planners and the Board of Supervisors found that the

live/work designation would not have an effect on neighborhood retail. Displacement of retail was not expected because retail paid higher rent and located on the ground floor while traditional live/work tenants paid low rent and located on the higher level. Residential neighborhood character was to be preserved since conversion of residential buildings to live/work was prohibited in Residential (R) and Residential Mixed Use (RM). A conditional use was required in Commercial (C) and Industrial (M) zoned areas; while non-residential structures required a conditional use in R and RM zones which offers the public an opportunity to participate in the project review process.

Planners reasoned that affordable housing would be preserved and enhanced by legalizing an existing situation and expanding upon it. These industrial spaces were underutilized and considered blight. Live/work conversion seemed the highest and best re-use. Also, if new live/work space was developed, people seeking this form would leave their traditional housing arrangement creating vacancies in traditional apartments for others not suited to the live/work lifestyle. Traffic would not be impacted in their view since living and working would take place in the same space. Industrial space was going to be preserved since, like retail, artists could not outbid industrial tenants and usually located on higher floors of industrial buildings. The promotion of economic development for small arts-related service “start-ups” who would get an opportunity to combine their living and working space was encouraged in this time of recession. It would also preserve landmarks and historic buildings through conversion, while parks and open space would not be affected.

THE LOOPHOLES

The clarity of hind-sight gives critics a benefit not afforded those making decisions at the time of legislation. While legislators should be vigilant when drafting ordinances to look for ways that it can be exploited, to predict all outcomes is impossible. By defining arts activities and spaces to include ‘commercial arts and art-related business services’ internet companies were able to

locate in new or converted live/work units and impacted neighborhoods as they grew from a small start up into a more traditional office use. As an incentive to developers, the planning code classified live/work development as a commercial use which not only exempted developers from residential development requirements and fees (as previously stated) but also from impact fees (i.e. transit, affordable housing) usually associated with office development. Other incentives to developers are explicitly promoted in the South of Market Area Plan (an element of the General Plan) that by “establishing flexible parking, density, and open space standards for this use and permitting live/work use throughout the South of Market.” It also allowed for commercial floor area ratio (FAR) to be used, which increased the possible density (SOMA Area Plan, 1990). These incentives worked very well and 1989 became the beginning of the live/work development boom (map 1). Though developers are responsible for creating a supply of units, they could not have predicted the incredible demand that arose in the late 1990s that contributed to the escalation of prices up from \$200,000 in the early 1990s to \$500,000 today (Whiting, 1992; Ginsberg, 2003).

WHAT HAPPENED

Live/work developments appealed to both the entrepreneur of a start-up internet company as a location because it was flexible enough to grow with the business, and to the workers who migrated into San Francisco seeking their fortune in stock options. The creation of about fifty-five thousand jobs brought an influx of middle class young upwardly-mobile professionals (Yuppies) creating a housing crisis that dropped vacancy rates to about one percent and pushed rents up to an all time high. (Hartman, 2002; Wolfe, 1999). This in turn triggered a grass roots backlash from the established residents who witnessed residential and industrial displacement as ‘dot-commers’ were able to outbid them for space, while landlords were quite willing to take advantage of the new market. This backlash coalesced in the form of community groups who began to lobby city hall for a halt to development in their neighborhoods and a few cases resulted

in property damage and suspected arson.

The San Francisco Planning Commission responded to public outcry by establishing an Industrial Protection Zone (IPZ) passed in 1999 which has been extended pending permanent controls through rezoning. The IPZ covers areas in the SOMA, Mission, Potrero Hill, and Bayview Hunters Point. The Prop L & K wars followed. Proposition L was certified for the November 2000 ballot on August 14, 2000. This ballot initiative was the culminating effort of the grass roots movement against the live/work boom. It called for a halt on development in the eastern

In a move to defeat this no growth initiative, Mayor Willie Brown and four supervisors (Becerrill, Brown, Katz, and Yaki) proposed an ordinance Proposition K which was received by the Department of Elections on August 9, 2000. Their measure was much less restrictive and allowed development to continue. Some of those in favor of Proposition K include the San Francisco Chamber of Commerce, San Francisco Planning and Urban Research (SPUR), Republican Party, San Francisco Labor Council, Alice B Toklas LGDC, Mexican American Political Association, and the Democratic Party. Both measures failed to receive a majority vote and were defeated in the November election; Prop L received 49.8% and Prop K 39%. However, a turnover on the Board of Supervisors took place with Prop L proponents McGoldrick, Daly, and Gonzales winning seats. This new Board of Supervisors passed a moratorium in 2001 calling a halt to all live/work permits issues in the city and have increased funding to the Planning Department's advance planning team to fund the current rezoning community planning process of the eastern neighborhood.



Map 1: Location of live/work development (San Francisco Planning Department, 2002)

neighborhoods pending a rezoning study and community planning process. It would classify live/work as residential use and redefine office use to include multimedia and computer based services. Its proponents include neighborhood activists, current supervisors Jake McGoldrick, Chris Daly, and Matt Gonzales, the Green Party, art and theatre groups, and housing activists.

CONCLUSION

While it is always tempting to criticize the political economic machine, career politicians, and bureaucrats when things go wrong, often well intentioned actions turn out different than expected. This is an example of an attempt at social engineering through policy that failed in its goals to protect artists and provide affordable housing. Why should artists be a protected class: what about teachers, construction workers, garbage, postal, police, and firemen/women? Was this a form of cultural elitism? I agree with Richard DeLeon's assessment that by creating a service economy San Francisco changed its demographic land-

scape from one that supported growth to one of slow growth (DeLeon in Hartman, 2002) rife with 'NIMBYism' (not in my backyard). The city shifted from a blue to white collar populous and with it imported some element of middle class suburban values.

The costs of development in San Francisco due to extensive regulation, uncertainty in the planning process and the cost of labor makes providing affordable housing prohibitive for the small developer. Current provisions for affordable housing call for inclusionary affordable housing. Affordable housing is defined in the Housing Element of the General Plan as up to 120% of the Area Median Income (AMI) or \$67,250 for a single person. Rather than live in a building with neighbors who have such a different lifestyle and standard of living, maybe working class people prefer to go to a market where prices are affordable to their budget than to ask for government subsidy. Given the choice to spend their hard earned money on a \$400,000 two bedroom condo in a building full of people who have paid \$900,000 for the same floorplan, or to move to the suburbs and get a new five bedroom house in a neighborhood of people of a similar social status, I think many would choose the latter. Also, to qualify for this kind of housing one must know how to access and work within the system which in itself may raise social justice issues. In addition to residential location choice issues, developments with 10 or more units are required to provide 12% of units below market rate. This solution falls short, first by the limited number of units it provides, secondly, possible avoidance of the requirement can occur through piecemeal development of large projects as well as the payment of in-lieu fees. Furthermore, there may also be opposition to inclusionary affordable units from neighbors who don't want it in their gentrified neighborhood

“Why should artists be a protected class: what about teachers, construction workers, garbage, postal, police, and firemen/women? Was this a form of cultural elitism?”

Affordable housing in San Francisco can only be provided through some form of subsidy; but why not create a new working class neighborhood for families. This perhaps can be done through a planned unit development that includes a mix of housing sizes that include duplex and fourplex construction with two to four bedrooms. If San Franciscans want to keep economic diversity in the city, financing could be offered through the various local credit unions associated with city employees such as teachers, police, fire, and civil servants. Incentives for buying the units could be conditioned on employment in a profession like teachers, police, fire, housekeeping, construction and etc., for a minimum number of years. However, of course this too could be subject to exploitation.

While the intention of the legislators was to preserve industrial land and to legalize an affordable housing alternative for artists, market forces won. The pent-up demand for development fueled one of the swiftest gentrification eras in San Francisco history. Even though the dot com boom is bust, loft sales continue to rise. But who is living in them? San Francisco has always been and will be

an attractive place to live especially in the post-industrial landscape. But it is becoming a city inhospitable to the working class family. Cities are dynamic living forms of human congregation and must change over time or else they decay. It is time to release the industrial past and prepare for the next wave of growth, yet in doing so some provisions must be made to keep economic diversity in the populous perhaps through subsidized planned unit development.

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MISSION YUPPIE ERADICATION PROJECT

Over the past several years the Mission has been colonized by pigs with money. Yuppie scumbags have crawled out of their haunts on Union Street and the suburbs to take our neighborhood away from us. They go to restaurants like The Slanted Door and TI-Couz and bars like Skylark and Liquid. They come to party, and end up moving in to what used to be affordable rental housing. They help landlords drive up rents, pushing working and poor people out of their homes.

Now Buffy and Chip are moving into "lawyer lofts" built by real estate speculators in the Mission's northeast corner, further gutting our neighborhood.

This yuppie takeover can be stopped and turned back. We can drive these cigar-bar clowns back to Orinda and Walnut Creek where they belong. How?

VANDALIZE YUPPIE CARS LEXUS - PORSCHEs - JAGUARS SPORT-UTILITY VEHICLES

- BREAK THE GLASS
- SCRATCH THE PAINT
- SLASH THEIR TIRES AND UPHOLSTERY
- TRASH THEM ALL!

If yuppie scum know their precious cars aren't safe on the streets of this neighborhood, they'll go away and they won't come back - and the trendoid restaurants, bars and shops that cater to them will go out of business

**MAKE THE MISSION DISTRICT
A SPORT-UTILITY VEHICLE FREE ZONE!
NOT ONE YUPPIE VEHICLE SHOULD BE SAFE
ON THE STREETS OF THE MISSION!
TAKE ACTION NOW!**

Figure 8. Response to gentrification in the Mission District. Photo, Frederic Stout, stoutfoto.



Rio's Favelas: Breathtaking views, heartbreaking poverty

Ayse Pamuk

The world's most highly populated cities are located in the developing world. Rio de Janeiro is one of them with a population of 10 million in its metropolitan region, according to 2000 Brazil census. Like other mega-cities in the developing world, the Rio metropolitan region has reached this phenomenal population level as a result of economic transformations in rural areas that continue to fuel migration to major cities. These demographic and economic changes require both massive new housing areas and the redevelopment of existing neighborhoods. And yet these cities and their metropolitan areas continue to experience great difficulties in meeting the challenges of rapid urban expansion. Census 2000 figures show significant proportions of Rio metropolitan area's population living in favelas .

Favelas are housing settlements of the poor built on occupied land. Throughout the developing world, many poor households can only afford housing of this type –in the informal sec-



Photos by Fernando Cavallieri, Instituto Municipal de Urbanismo Pereira Passos



tor—and live in informal housing settlements like the *favelas* in Brazil. They are called, *bidonvilles* in Algeria and Morocco, *barriadas* in Peru, *kampongs* in Indonesia, *barrios piratas* in Mexico, *villas de miseria* in Argentina, and *gecekondu* in Turkey. Their common features are: 1) lack of land tenure security; 2) lack of basic infrastructure such as piped drinking water inside dwelling units, sewerage, and electricity; 3) predominance of physically sub-standard dwellings; and 4) locations that are not in compliance with land use regulations and are often not suitable for development (e.g., hillsides, wetlands, flood plains). Not surprisingly households living in these conditions are vulnerable to economic shocks, public health epidemics, and environmental disasters (e.g. mudslides).

Innovative local programs like the Favela-Bairro Program carried out by the municipality of Rio de Janeiro offer some hope in integrating favelas with the rest of the urban fabric by providing basic infrastructure and delivering social programs in favelas.

For more information visit Professor Pamuk's Brazil research project web site: <http://bss.sfsu.edu/pamuk/brazil/>



Asia's City of Angels

Rob Bregoff

From my room on the 34th floor of the Sofitel in the Silom area of Bangkok, I can look down on the rooftop pool of another hotel across the wide, congested street. There is a "skytrain" line that runs nearby, not only the solo alternative for Bangkok's constant gridlock, but a welcome respite from the tropical temperatures and humidity. The doors whoosh open, and you step into a walk-in refrigerator, filled with people talking on cell phones.

Riverboats, crude versions of the Vaporettos which navigate Venice's Grand Canal, motor up and down the river with convenient frequency

At the Morchit station end of the skytrain line lies the Chatuchak weekend market. Nine to fifteen thousand booths (no one seems to know for sure how many there are) crowd onto a lot the size of a suburban shopping mall, and sell everything from, well, everywhere.

Next door to my hotel, however, is an alley of small hovels, lined with street vendors selling everything from pirated CDs to whole grilled squid-on-a-skewer. Further down the small street is a large Victorian wooden house, in a fairly advanced state of decay, which harkens back to when Bangkok was called the Venice of Asia, wealthy from trade, and gridded by canals, few of which remain. A block further up I can see a small mosque, framed by minarets, sitting slightly askew of the street grid, perhaps oriented towards Mecca.

The Chaopraya, a wide river, waters silty and gray, provides another efficient transportation mode, and, again, respite from the tropical heat. Riverboats, crude versions of the Vaporettos which navigate Venice's Grand Canal, motor up and down the river with convenient frequency, stopping at piers on either side of the swift-moving waters. Glimpses up smaller waterways pique my imagination, and offer glimpses of lifestyles as varied as the local menus. Even in this city with a metropolitan area population of nearly nine million, some Thai families lead seemingly primitive lives in houses, or sometimes huts, which stand on poles along the river. From the river bus, you can see people doing their laundry and, and bands of children laughing and diving into the murky waters.

Bangkok is enigmatic: a seductive, sweetly-scented city with air pollution worse than Los Angeles; a place where the very rich and the very poor seem to exist side-by-side; a city riding on silk, sex, and the rich night air.

Commerce is everywhere. Any part of the sidewalk wide enough for two people to pass will be bordered by food carts, or perhaps an impromptu tent selling copies of this season's

Louis Vuitton bags, or DVDs or computer programs for the equivalent of a few dollars. This is a city of prostitution and piracy, but, somehow, isn't dangerous or sleazy. It's also a place where the primarily Buddhist populace reveres the royal family,



Photo by F. Kraas

especially Bhumibol Adulyadej, the camera-toting king with a predilection for engineering, painting, and jazz. Large posters of his majesty in glasses and elaborate military garb, often with a Canon SLR hanging around his neck, adorn the roadside everywhere in the country. In my American mindset, all I can think of is "product placement".

Planning seemingly has never existed here. There is no "town center", but rather convoluted webs of commercial centers, shopping districts and religious sites. I can't recall any great public spaces, like Trafalgar Square or the Piazza Navona.

There are no bike paths, and even the sidewalks, where they exist, are unreliable, often blocked by signage or food stalls.

There seems like there would be immense competition for public space, and, therefore, hostility and violence, but people are friendly and co-operative. Bangkok is a city with much visible poverty, but not a lot of visible homelessness. Thailand's average income hovers near \$1800 a year, yet there seem to be no shortage of Bangkok residents willing to pay the equivalent of \$2.50 for coffee at one of an escalating number of Starbucks cafes.

In spite of what seems like a dense settlement teetering on the brink of chaos and disaster, Bangkok is a thrilling experience. How a city with such a spontaneous pattern of growth and infrastructure works so well must speak mainly to its people and their patience and industry. There is much good here, and it all seems rather accidental.



Photo courtesy of The Perso Club

Adaptive Reuse: Rethinking Neighborhoods

Hillary Strobel

What is the consequence to a community when residents are displaced? When buildings are demolished and replaced by parking lots or box stores that are owned by distant corporations? Can communities survive the losses? Is there a positive way for a neighborhood to change?

According to social scientist Howard James Kunstler, neighborhoods are naturally inclined to change. Buildings will come and go as their life spans end. Stores will open and close according to the whims of shoppers. People will move into and out of a neighborhood based on finances and desirability¹. We must ask ourselves if the natural process of neighborhood change is a slow, organic change or one that can be sped up. Often a neighborhood will change for the "better," meaning that upscale stores and new buildings arrive, displacing old ones. Of course, this perception of "better" is subjective, as users and observers of a neighborhood will debate. We in the United States often believe that when a neighborhood evolves into one with high-end stores and expensive property, it has been "gentrified." Traditionally, a sped up change will be disruptive and tend to lead to a less natural transition; hence the often virulent opposition to policy and planning which has this goal in mind. This policy path often leads to gentrification.

The term "gentrification" was coined in Britain in the 1960's to describe a phenomenon that was occurring in the neighborhoods of London. Houses and other buildings were being purchased by land speculators, government agencies and other developers and subsequently being rehabilitated, raising rents and encouraging upscale retail in the process.² Many believe that the same process is happening again and again in the United States, as the perception is that low-income residents are being priced out

of their neighborhoods and their old houses are being appropriated by wealthy folks who enjoy drinking Starbucks coffee and shopping at the Gap. Because there are serious issues that are coming out of land use debate in cities, let us for a moment put aside the arguments associated with gentrification and focus instead on the uses and reuses of buildings. By looking this way, we might have the opportunity to see that natural change in neighborhoods can be beneficial.

Adaptive Reuse is a concept has been in use for centuries around the world, mainly in areas where land space and building materials have been scarce. European countries have been doing this for many generations. Adaptive Reuse has many advocates, each of whom have definitions; roughly, the idea is "the process by which structurally sound older buildings are developed for economically viable new uses."³ This definition reflects the viewpoint of land use planners, who typically decide when a building might be more useful in a new state rather than as a pile of rubble.

In the United States, the typical life span of a building is 35 years.⁴ This strikes most as an irrationally short life span, and in some ways it is. Buildings, like most other products that are sold to the public, are created with what is known as "planned obsolescence." This term describes the idea that a product is built to fall apart or stop working after a certain period of time so that consumers will buy a newer version when it does. The same goes for buildings. This statistic takes into account how often Americans tend to move out of homes, as well as how often buildings in a business district or central city are demolished and new ones built. If a building has such a short life span, how can we maintain any sense of continuity in our neighborhoods and center



Photo courtesy of SEM Architects

cities? In the past, planners and city developers have attempted to integrate into city planning what has come to be known as "urban renewal." The idea was that "old" and "useless" buildings would be demolished rather than saved and used again for a new purpose. Such a policy is very disruptive to communities.

Urban renewal is based on ideas set forth by Le Corbusier and his associates in the early years of the 20th century, to combat blight (urban decay such as graffiti, litter, bad smells, etc.) and urban "squalor."⁵ The idea was that the conditions of cities—overcrowding, bad city layout design, congested streets and poor housing—were the causes of deteriorating health and criminal human behavior. The solution was to be rid of cities and encourage people to live in exurbs (the suburbs of modern times) or in "glimmering towers set into parks and intersected by Superhighways." From this framework came the modern notion of wholesale destruction of neighborhoods deemed dirty or unsafe by city planners.

An excellent modern example of this urban renewal is the Fillmore District of San Francisco. The neighborhood is centered on the intersection of Geary Boulevard and Fillmore Street, and has suffered its fair share of setbacks and redesign policies. During the 1940's, San Francisco saw an influx of African American workers, to the tune of 43,500 by the year 1950. Most settled in the Fillmore District. Over time, perceptions of crime and blight in this neighborhood grew. The Fillmore neighborhood was targeted by planners and developers for urban renewal, which many feel was a racially biased decision. In 1964, redevelopment plan WAA-2 was put into action. This plan set into motion one of the largest scale redevelopments in San Francisco's history. Nearly one half of a square mile of housing and storefronts were demolished and roughly 15,000 people were displaced. When community organizations protested, the city agreed to build

1,500 to 1,800 housing units to accommodate the original, typically low-income residents.⁶ The final project was completed in the 1980's, when the Fillmore Center's "glimmering towers" were opened. (See Urban Action 2001 for more details.)

While the point of the WAA-2 plan was to eliminate blight as determined by the San Francisco Redevelopment Agency, it is still a problem in the Fillmore District. Many storefronts remain unrented and others are rented by large box stores such as Burger King and Safeway. Rents are high, meaning low-income residents are excluded from living there. Homelessness is a large issue in this neighborhood and people are mugged frequently on the sidewalks. The revitalization strategies of urban renewal have done little to alleviate the conditions that cause blight; in fact, it appears to the casual observer to be worse than the 1950's. While the problem in the 1950's was sub-par housing, it now seems to be fundamental social inequality and city government mismanagement.

“If a building has such a short life span, how can we maintain any sense of continuity in our neighborhoods and center cities?”

What might have been the case if those buildings were reused instead of torn down? Might residents have been able to remain in the community? Would storefronts be rented by local, small businesses? The likely answer is yes. Too often, consumer-minded Americans have destroyed cultural heritages by completely erasing what came before us and building "new, clean and modern" structures instead. The concept of new, clean and modern has been traditionally linked to a certain type of city resident: the young, urban professional. He and she come armed with large paychecks and social mobility. These factors in turn encourage box stores to provide new residents with three-dollar cups of coffee and ultra modern furniture. It is in the context of urban renewal that we tend to see negative gentrification, because what would be the point, from the city planner's perspective, in recreating

a neighborhood that was being torn down? The original tenants, who are overwhelmingly renters⁷, have little political clout and little money to spend on life's frivolities. If communities were to unite in the ideal of keeping places vital and intact, through reuse of existing resources, many issues attached to renewal and gentrification may be avoided.

Reuse costs less in construction fees than a new building. It provides more jobs to people who might need them: Bruce Chapman, head of the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, statistics provided by the U.S. Department of Commerce states that every \$1,000,000 spent on rehabilitation creates an average of 109 jobs, compared with an average 69 jobs for new construction.⁸ Since costs are kept down by reusing, property taxes stay lower, meaning that storeowners can maintain viable businesses. Renters can afford to stay because, theoretically, rents can stay lower. Since current residents can stay, the fabric that maintains a neighborhood can remain intact. People tend to use sidewalks more in neighborhoods that are compact and have lively street lives, and this will often lead to safer neighborhoods as people look out for each other.⁹ Reusing buildings that already come out to the sidewalk is an important element. Urban renewal, with its towers set into vacant open space, rarely encourages use of the sidewalk.

According to William H. Whyte, cities work better when they take advantage of what they've already got. Many cities do wrong by themselves when they attempt to recreate the shopping atmosphere of a suburb, for example, because they are by definition not suburbs. Malls tend to fail in central cities because they are out of

scale with the surrounding development.¹⁰ It is, in Whyte's view, not incorrect to think of upscaling as a positive step for a neighborhood. Since many neighborhoods have tools to work with, such as houses and buildings that may be used again, what is needed is community mobilization and government dollars. Traditionally, the government will loan monies to people interested in buying a suburban home but not for rehabilitation of a building in the central city.¹¹ Additionally, the people who will most likely benefit

from such development- the (low-income) residents already living in the neighborhood- are highly mobile; "40 percent of the renters in a city neighborhood will move."¹² So the likely solution will be that people who already have money and social stability will purchase an abandoned building in the center city and fix it up. While we tend to think of this process as "gentrification," it is not as disruptive as renewal to residents. "The poor are not being hurt by middle-class investment. They are being hurt by disinvestments- by landlords who let buildings go to rot, who walk away from them, who torch them."¹³

"The poor are not being hurt by middle-class investment. They are being hurt by disinvestments- by landlords who let buildings go to rot, who walk away from them, who torch them."

-William H. Whyte

Perhaps the best solution is for city governments and city planners to divorce themselves from the traditional planning patterns. We should no longer focus on "redoing" an entire neighborhood that we don't like anymore, but rather start reusing what we already have. "Neighborhood integration must be pursued. A condition is that all neighbors- colonizers [new move-ins] and colonials [residents] agree to integrate, improve the neighborhood, rehabilitate the houses, and keep the streets and public spaces clean and green. This requires the poor be helped. It requires low-interest rehabilitation loans for them. It requires that renters be turned into owners. For the federal government, rehabilitation loan

guarantees for the old residents of recovering neighborhoods are probably the least expensive and safest way to provide desperately needed low-income housing."¹⁴ The important ingredient here is that the homeownership being encouraged should not be in suburbs but in downtowns and so-called blighted neighborhoods. It has been written again and again by social scientists and urban scholars that neighborhoods that maintain a level of consistency, even while undergoing modest change, are safer, cleaner and maintained more lovingly. Reuse is an important step in this process, as rundown and beat up buildings are given a second lease on life.

Cities will not survive into the future if people are constantly being encouraged to leave them for the perceived quality of life in suburbs. Neighborhoods will never make it if they are demolished and replaced with parking lots and "projects." Renters should not be encouraged to move because of lack of support from landlords and city planners. All who love cities and want to see natural, organic shifts that will keep neighborhoods vital and alive should embrace Adaptive Reuse, the recycling of buildings for new and fantastic purposes.

ENDNOTES

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Eat Independently

Robin Schidlowski



"I for one am fed up with supermarkets. Even farmers markets. I can cook a meal from scratch, but where do my vegetables, grains, and legumes come from? Why is the organic produce at Whole Foods so expensive? Why are their red peppers imported from Israel? And why can't I grow red peppers in San Francisco?"

U.S. society is normalized and homogenized and we have been taught that the supermarket is how it is and that it's okay. I disagree. Dependency on a market, on an outside source, for food is not okay with me. I have escaped some of what I consider the less attractive features of our consumer culture; the automobile, the television, and the microwave, and now I am determined to assert my fundamental human right to feed myself."

Those were words I wrote just a few months ago and today I am working on a plan to grow my own food. The term "food insecure" is used in academic and political circles to refer to hungry or undernourished people. I believe that it extends even further, to those who may never be at a loss

for food, but who neither have control over where their food comes from or how it is grown. We as Americans, even those of us who aren't starving, are not in control of what we eat and that is why I am learning, with concerted effort, how to feed myself.

Several months into the process, I have young plants, growing in earth, in containers, on my fire escape in the Tenderloin neighborhood of San Francisco. I sneak tastes of my lettuce and watch my onion bulbs develop underground by observing their leaves above the earth. I am defying the odds; using illegal space to grow food, growing on the north side of a shaded building without direct sunlight, and proving that I don't have to depend on Safeway to get food.

Although I am far from being a harvester of excess produce,

my food growing experience has been invaluable in that it has taught me the simple mechanics of how plants grow. The seeds that I put in containers and moisten, sprout. The sprouts I transplant into planter boxes grow. This is how food is made.

Nearing thirty years of age, it is almost embarrassing to admit that I had never been responsible for the sprouting of a seed, until I remembered where I came from. I was raised as an American, a living example of the suburban dream that my parents and so many others had in the 1960's and 70's. This ideal created for us, however, has sterilized our culture and left many people without a connection to the earth and therefore to what we are, human beings.

Growing your own food in a city, without a plot of land, seems unreasonable, but that is because we have been taught to think so. The truth is that seeds, with a little help from us, will grow where we plant them. Human beings have experimented with the earth for thousands of years, perfecting methods of gardening and in just two generations my family and many others have left it all behind for modernization.

I am lucky to be able to pick and choose how I modernize, to have relative autonomy, in a culture that tells me I shouldn't. My goal now is to continue growing food and spreading the word about how to do it. It is imperative that we, as a culture, teach our children that they are human and a mere element in the cycle of life. I grew up not realizing that, and have had to struggle to recognize that I too can, and should, have a symbiotic relationship with the earth that supports me.



Photos courtesy of Berkeley Ecology Center

An Interview with Ben Jordan

Urban Action Staff

“Consider the way that we eat and how it affects us. Think about drawing a boundary around yourself and consider what comes in and out of the boundary. Are the things that come and go sustainable? How do we reduce quantities and needs so that we get the minimum flow in and out of the boundary? How about in the urban context?”

Recently, Urban Action sat down with a young civil engineer who works and lives in San Francisco and asked him about urban sustainability issues in the dawning of the 21st century. His name is Ben Jordan, and in addition to the work he does for his engineering firm during the work week, Ben is involved in a long list of personal projects that are designed to promote healthy, “closed loop” living systems in the big city. “Closed loop” describes a system with no waste or with waste being the first ingredient of the next system; for example, a closed loop food system means that all food waste is composted or recycled, instead of being thrown away. One of the largest and most comprehensive issues that Ben works on is food. This subject is wide and encompassing, going far beyond the food products we put into our mouths. Urban eating involves a long and potentially devastating process in its current form, from the loss of water in monoculture agriculture practice and unhealthy damming processes, to the petroleum used to transport food materials to the city, to the breakdown of the local economy when money is spent in a corporate-owned grocery supermarket, to the waste produced by throwing food products and packaging away instead of reusing them. Human waste as a by-product of eating is also

“Changing the way we eat and obtain our food, and deal with our waste, can change our world.”

a huge issue that currently negatively affects our world. Things don’t have to continue this way, is Ben’s philosophy. There are a host of positive changes that the average person living and working, and EATING, in the urban environment, can undertake. As Ben stated, “Eating is the most political act you’ll ever take.” In other words, changing the way we eat and obtain our food, and deal with our waste, can change our world.

In terms of urban living, there is a certain mindset currently afoot that food is grown “elsewhere” and not in a city. In California, there is the Central Valley, currently one of the most productive agricultural environments in the world and one of the most endangered. It has fallen victim to monoculture agricultural practices, where farmers plant only one crop on their farms instead of several, and the soil is rarely left fallow, so that over time, the soil has lost so many nutrients that massive amounts of chemical fertilizers are used. Because complementary crops are not often planted, natural pest controls that live and feed on complementary crops make farmers feel that the use of massive amounts of chemical pesticides is necessary. As food is produced on huge farms far from the urban environment, where a majority of Americans live, petroleum is needed in large quantities to transport it to urban supermarkets. “The average distance that food travels from the source of production to the consumer’s hands is 1,142 miles,” Ben stated. In the initial stages of food production, we now have the problems of chemical fertilizers, chemical pesticides, petroleum, and wasteful farming techniques. Then comes the problem of water.

According to Ben, “There are 78,000 dams in the United States alone. 60% of all water used in the United States is used in agriculture.” Most of that water is wasted in unsustainable water techniques, such as using sprinklers in the mid-day heat, when most of the water evaporates on the leaves instead of watering the soil and roots.

Ben told Urban Action about a program known as Community Supportive Agriculture and its relationship with farmer’s markets and consumers. In this program, a locally worker/farmer owned farm, usually within easy distance of a city or urban environment, supplies food to local consumers, either to local farmer’s markets (instead of corporate supermarkets) or directly to a food drop off/pick up center, on a rotating harvest. In the case of a food drop off point, a consumer orders from the farmer a certain amount of food to last a week or two weeks, and the farmer drops the food off at an arranged drop-off center in box increments. The cost of a box of food is anywhere from \$12-18. Ben stated, “This arrangement cuts out travel, petroleum usage, and wasteful agricultural practices. Farmers are paid fair wages and there are no shipping fees. These [arrangements] have become much more popular in the past five years or so, due to increased public interest.” Money changing hands stays within the local economy, usually passing directly from the consumer to the farmer, and in the case of farmer’s markets, to small, local merchants. These small, urban farmers do not tend to use chemicals in their food production and also grow more than one crop at a time, increasing soil productivity and meeting consumer needs. Since the food is delivered in box increments, it is possible to transport it on a vehicle as small as a bicycle. Through this program, many negative, non-sustainable issues surrounding food can be solved. However, one very large one remains.

From food comes waste. Most people do not

think twice about what happens to human waste (nor do they care to) once it has left the body. The problems associated with dealing with human waste have wreaked huge amounts of disaster on the environment and quality of life for a great many people. “The concept of utilizing water to transport waste is a relatively new concept, which required rapid infrastructure change. The infrastructure changes required huge sums of money. The rest of the world is struggling to keep up with Western standards of waste transportation, rather than using less money and infrastructure to develop sustainable waste systems.” Additionally, using water to transport waste “leads to waterborne diseases. Using water for waste allows pathogens and bacteria to travel from one warm place to the next, meaning from one human body to another.” In many non-Western countries, waterborne illnesses are epidemic. Additionally, wastewater treatment is very expensive in many areas. “San Francisco, for example, spends \$4 million annually to kill germs in wastewater, which is so bad that it couldn’t be discharged to the Bay.”

“Producing healthy food locally and disposing of it in a healthy way locally is the best way for our urban environments to survive in the future.”

There is a solution to this issue, which is to simply reuse what you produce. This thinking requires a huge shift away from what most people are comfortable talking about, but it is logical and does not have to have negative associations. “In the past, the process has been to develop a technology or approach to a situation where the problem has been addressed and it’s considered solved. It’s hard to change.” Ben is referring to the sanitation reforms of the 1920’s in the United States, which led to the use of water to transport human waste after a particularly violent outbreak of cholera, but using water for human waste “is not the best way. We need to teach and understand the alternatives. Our problem is that we don’t reuse what we have.” In terms of reducing the quantities of waste so that we get the minimum flow in and out of our

collective urban boundary, one very effective solution is for urban residents, and rural residents as well, for that matter, to use what are known as composting toilets.

Compost is a term describing the recycling of organic matter to produce a beneficial byproduct. The byproduct is essentially soil made from food products that would be thrown away (peels, stems, cores, fats, etc) or discharged matter that would go to the ocean. Since water is used to transport human waste, the ocean is where most of it ends up.

Compost is a form of aerobic (oxygen-fueled) decomposition that happens in nature, so by creating our own compost and using it in our urban gardens, we can boost the productivity of our soils and reduce waste. "Human by-products, by nature, are organic and can be applied to soil as compost; however, it requires special attention because of pathogens, cultures and toxins found in the human body, as well as phobias and misconceptions." This is where composting toilets enter the picture. "Human waste requires well maintained and designed systems, as well as manageable plans for taking care of waste." These toilets come in a variety of styles, sizes and complexities, and can be used in apartments, homes and even larger buildings, such as offices. "Basically, education is the key to composting toilets. The best

thing to do is teach yourself as much as possible and then [install] it yourself." There are many companies, especially on the Internet, as well as local engineering and manufacturing firms, who make and sell composting toilets at reasonable prices. It is possible to obtain ones that do not use existing piping systems, making the technology available to apartment dwellers, who cannot alter their plumbing systems and may have very small urban gardens (usually in pots or con-

tainers). It is also possible to install elaborate systems that connect many toilets to one piping system, which collects all of the waste for use on a large plot of land. Ben recently installed a composting toilet in a client's home in North Oakland, after extensive research and consultation. In the end, the compost obtained through this technology helps to sustain the urban agriculture system, avoiding the overuse of chemical fertilizers and significantly reducing the food waste stream, as well as the amount of water used in waste transport.

"The past trend in this country has been to learn one trade, have one goal. Nowadays, we are more civic-minded and thoughtful. As an engineer, I feel responsible to teach people about sustainable living."

-Ben Jordan

"Composting, through food reuse and using composting toilets, along with the reuse of water through greywater systems, has to happen for cities to be sustainable. Urban agriculture and local food production has to be integrated with water reuse and compost for cities to survive. A closed system equals a sustainable city. Our landscapes (urban agriculture and urban forests) should be edible and reusable." If we go back to the original question of how to reduce what enters and exits the imaginary boundary that we might draw around ourselves, the process of reusing our food waste and cutting our consumption of unsustainable food will translate into a more beneficial future. Producing healthy food locally and disposing of it in a healthy way locally is the best way for our urban environments to survive in the future.

As we finished our discussion with Ben Jordan, he said, "The past trend in this country has been to learn one trade, have one goal. Nowadays, we are more civic-minded and thoughtful. As an engineer, I feel responsible to teach people about sustainable living."



Havana, Cuba

Raquel Pinderhughes

Calle L e/ 17 y 19
Vedado, Habana
CUBA

I am sitting on the terrace of my apartment in Vedado, Havana looking out at dozens of people walking down Calle L, the name of the street on which I live with my husband and two children when I am working in Havana. Some people are on their way to work, others are going to buy vegetables, rice, beans, and mani at the neighborhood farmers market down the street; dozens of parents are holding the hands of young children in burgundy, white and blue school uniforms as they walk to school. The sun is shining, it's already hot outside and I am feeling very blessed to be able to spend time in this unique and beautiful island nation where people are extremely friendly, generous, and welcoming to me and my family.

The country of Cuba stirs deep emotions and opinions for most people in the United States, even though most Americans have never traveled to the island or met any of its 11 million residents. This is not surprising because since Fidel Castro took office in 1959, the US government and media has focused almost exclusively on problems in Cuba and very little, if at all, on the accomplishments of the government and the Cuban people. Few Americans are aware that the post 1959 government was founded on the principle of creating a socially just and equitable Cuban society and that most planning and policy decisions stem from this principle. One of the government's first major planning decisions was to design a set of policies and programs that would systematically begin to alleviate decades of deeply, entrenched, inter-generational rural and urban poverty. During this time most of Cuba's population lived in poverty, as tenant farmers, manual laborers, and carboneros in the country's rural areas as well as the urban poor surviving in major cities like Havana and Santiago. The government's initial focus was on the rural areas of the country where people had lives as impoverished tenant farmers for generations, working for wealthy Spanish, French, American and Cuban landholders. The goal was to systematically confront years of malnutrition and hunger, lack of basic infrastructure, illiteracy and lack of education, rural isolation, terribly inadequate housing and living conditions, and poverty.

Support from the Soviet Bloc allowed Cuba to industrialize its agriculture sector, strengthen its rural and urban infrastructures to industrial nation standards so that today all Cubans have access to clean, safe water, electricity, gas, phones, television, transportation, health care, and high quality education. But because the US embargo prohibited nations from trading with Cuba, Cuba was forced to become highly dependent on resources and goods imported from the USSR including chlorine to improve water quality, farming and manufacturing equipment and inputs, soaps, shampoos, birth control pills, seed stock, paper, cement, aluminum, electric conductor materials, food, and medicine. By the 1980s Cuba received almost 65% of its food products and 90% of its medicines and medical equipment from the USSR. So when the Soviet Bloc fell apart in 1989 the country experienced a crisis that the Cuban government came to call the "Special Period."



I hear many sounds while I sit on the terrace writing this postcard. I hear Dona Yolanda watering her plants on the terrace below. Dona Yolanda is the mother of two boys, she's an anesthesiologist, and a wonderful neighbor. When she hears my daughter coughing she'll call to me from her terrace downstairs and tells me to send my daughter

down to her apartment so she can serve her some Chinese tea. I hear salsa music being played in Don Jose's house next door. I hear children reciting their lessons in the elementary school next to our apartment building. The school windows are open and I just have to turn my head to the left to see the children in their classrooms, attentive to their teachers and actively engaged in learning.

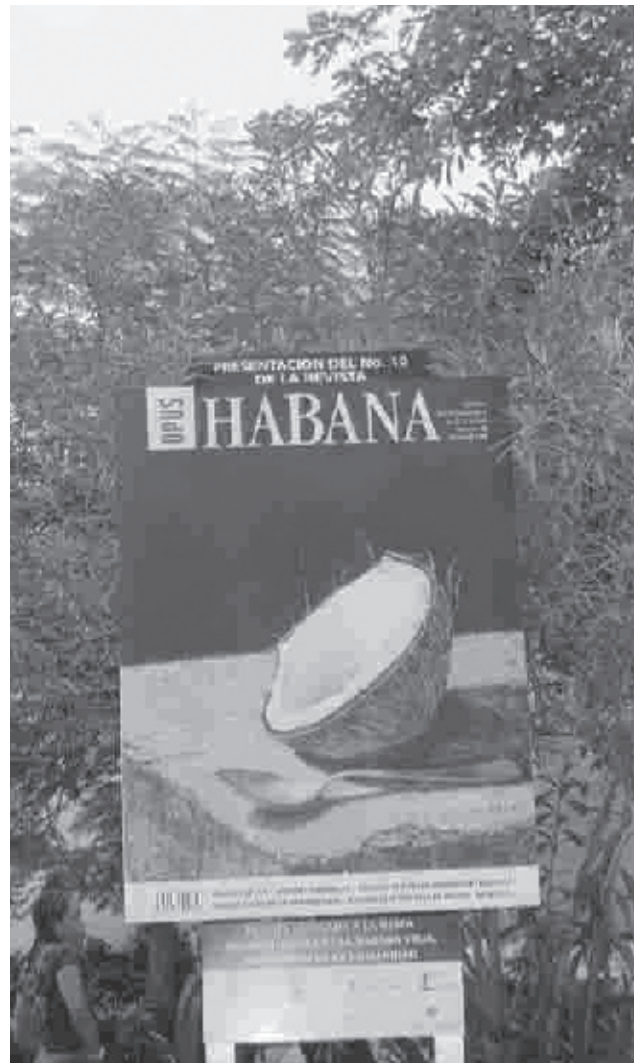
This visit I'm here to collect information on the history of environmental planning in Cuba. Beginning in 1959, and up until the current period, the Cuban government has been dedicated to protecting and sustaining the natural environment--huge efforts at reforestation, species protection, maintaining and encouraging biodiversity, and supporting bio-reserves

throughout the country. Soon I'll have to stop writing to you because I need to go inside and prepare the beans for tonight's supper. Since the beans I bought at the farmers market were freshly picked and dried from a nearby farm there are tiny pieces of dirt and gravel mixed in with the beans; I need to pick them out before I soak and cook them. It's a process most Cubans engage in daily and it ties me to millions of people all over the world who still eat freshly picked local food. Most of my scholarly writing on Cuba focuses on urban agriculture in Cuba and the government sponsored infrastructure that supports more than 8,000 farms in metropolitan Havana. It's amazing to walk or bike through Havana and see how much food is being grown in the city – vegetables, fruits, beans, cassava, some urban farmers even grow rice!; Today, 16% of the food grown in Cuba is produced on urban farms in Havana!

Tonight we'll eat black beans, rice, cabbage, carrots and platanos. After dinner, we'll walk up the street to Havana's famous ice cream parlor – Coppelia. While standing on line we might be entertained by a singer or a magician doing tricks for the crowd. We might also buy a bag of sweet cookies from a street vendor to mix into our ice-cream, we might look at the large crowd of people waiting on line at the Yarra movie theater across the street. Cubans go to the movies often since it's very affordable and there are many movie theaters. I've got a lot more to say about this city and country but it's time to stop writing and get started on those beans. After that, I'll take my son on the bus to the Foundation for the Environment where I have an interview scheduled this afternoon. Tonight, after ice cream at Coppelia, we'll go to a concert with friends, walking there and back in the warm, Havana night.

Best regards to you all,

Raquel



Photos by Raquel Pinderhughes

Inner City Teachers: Agents for Social Change

Zack Kahn

INTRODUCTION

Through teaching math, English, social studies, and science, many teachers in inner-city areas of poverty have succeeded in raising test scores and helping their students to get jobs over the years. They have also succeeded in helping many students to stay away from drugs and gangs, and to attend college. I commend these teachers for making a difference. However, problems in the inner-city ranging from lack of jobs, health care, and quality housing to an overabundance of drugs and violence have remained, and in many cases have worsened. Inner-city teachers are in an ideal position to improve conditions in inner-cities by focusing their efforts on communities instead of individuals.

This paper is a call to action for those teachers who are working in public schools in impoverished inner-city areas to work towards justice and equality for the people in the neighborhoods where they teach. I suggest strategies that will do more than help a few students to escape the devastating conditions of inner-city areas of poverty, strategies that will help a community to improve as a whole. Furthermore, this paper should serve as an inspiration to those who may be considering teaching as a career. In this paper I analyze four areas in which teachers are in a position to achieve results: (1) reducing divisions between ethnic and other groups, (2) creating a sense of belonging to a community, (3) using a curriculum that gives hope and empowers students through the encouragement of critical thinking, and (4) encouraging community and political activism. I explain why each of these areas is important and suggest strategies for achieving these results.

REDUCING DIVISIONS BETWEEN ETHNIC AND OTHER GROUPS

One might think that the people of the inner-city would be united around common concerns such as the lack essential services like jobs, health-care, quality education, childcare, affordable housing, and decent grocery stores. However, as Browning, Marshall, & Tabb (2003) argue, in many cities divisions exist along ethnic and cultural lines and in these cities coalitions should form around the concerns mentioned above (p. 383). This suggests that minority groups, despite differences in religion, languages, foods eaten, sexual orientation, gender, and appearance, share common interests and ideologies that should be the basis of pursuing political power, and achieving social, economic, and environmental justice. Inner-city teachers are in an ideal position to help form such coalitions.

Among children, teasing and infliction of bodily harm, based on the differences mentioned above (religion, language, food eaten, sexual orientation, gender, and appearance), are common (Eslea & Mukhtar, 2000). Teachers are in an ideal position to help dampen this discriminating behavior, but as Reese (2001) points out, teachers tend to place “emphasis on the experiences of mainstream society at the expense of emphasizing the cultures and histories of other ethnic, racial, cultural, and religious groups” (p. 183) In some cases teachers add information about other cultures, but this information is still presented from the point of view of the dominant culture, which does not place value on other perspectives.

To reduce divisions between groups, Reese (2001) claims that ethnic mistrust should be reduced by the promotion of self-respect and re-

spect for others in society. I have observed many children being hostile toward other cultures because it is the reaction society has encouraged in them; however many children are simply curious about different cultures because they know very little of them. In a multiethnic classroom, there is a prime opportunity for students to teach other students their languages and about their cultures. This validates the students who are teaching by showing them that their language and culture are important while at the same time helps the rest of the class to better understand their culture. Teachers should also expose students to different cultures by having guests such as homeless people, gay people, transgendered people, women in male-dominated professions, and people from other cultures not represented by the students in their classes. Encouraging students to respect and understand these cultures will lead to less stereotyping and less mistrust creating the basis for a community to work together.

CREATING A SENSE OF BELONGING TO A COMMUNITY

Teachers in inner-city areas of poverty can play a crucial role in creating a sense of duty to one's community. While for many students being able to support oneself may be considered a major accomplishment given the circumstances in which they grew up, others may be capable of achieving much more. However if these more capable students follow the path most Americans, and proceed on a quest of accumulating material possessions, they have done nothing to serve their communities. Often, people who can leave the ghetto, will (Lemann, 2002). They move to locations that have more to offer them, without even pausing to think that they could live in a place to which they have a lot to offer. By staying in the communities in which they were raised, advantaged students can help the people who live in inner-city areas of poverty who are often so preoccupied with the daily challenges of their lives, such as taking care of their children

“I have observed many children being hostile toward other cultures because it is the reaction society has encouraged in them.”

and working several jobs that they do not have the time or energy to prevent social and environmental injustices from happening in their neighborhoods (Bullard, 1995, p. 13). These issues must be addressed in K-12 classrooms.

Many children grow up worshiping basketball players and rappers, not for what they have given to society but because of what they have taken. These people generally live extravagant and wasteful lives, and give relatively little back to their communities. Teachers have a duty to present to their students other possible heroes: those unselfish people who worked for the advancement of entire communities, such as Martin Luther King, Jr., and Mahatma Gandhi. Teachers should present their students with people who are making a difference in their communities, such as local politicians, community organizers, volunteers, and others working for the community. They should also help their students to feel that it is possible and respectable for them to be like these people.

USING A CURRICULUM THAT CREATES HOPE AND EMPOWERMENT

A curriculum should create hope and give students a feeling of empowerment instead of devastating them and leaving them feeling helpless. To illustrate this point, I wish to use the mainstream evening news on such networks as ABC, NBC, and CBS as prime examples of information sources that often leave their viewers feeling devastated and helpless. On the evening news, viewers see stories of crime, political events, and wars that focus on what happened. For example, in a story of a murder, we will hear who the victim was, who the suspects are, where the murder happened, what police are doing about it, and how friends and family of the victim feel about losing a loved one. We may also be told a simple reason for the murder (e.g. a fight broke out and Lance shot Martin), and we may be given a phone number of a local police department which

we can call if we have any leads. However, any in depth analysis of the reasons for this crime are not covered. For example, if the fight that broke out is related to gang violence the news gives us no tools or knowledge with which to understand why fights break out in gangs, why gang members use guns, why gangs even exist, or any of the other questions regarding gangs that should be crossing our minds. If we do not understand possible causes of an issue, we are incapable of even beginning to solve the problems associated with it. If someone does not understand why his computer does not work, he is most likely not going to know how to fix it. If someone does not understand why a school is being shut down, why health care costs are rising, why businesses are leaving their neighborhoods, why unemployment is rising, or why our country is at war with another country, they don't know what they can do to help fix the problem.

If teachers help students to better understand certain issues, they may be able to start connecting them to their lives, thinking about them critically, and discussing them with their friends, families, and communities. When opportunities arise for them to do something about the situation, they may choose to participate in such activities. For example, most people have no idea what the impact the purchase of a new computer has on the environment and on people, but if someone were given an analysis of all the components of the computer that included everything from the mining of the raw materials to the disposal of the computer and found that the manufacture of computers caused respiratory illnesses, breast cancer, birth defects, and the destruction of water sources at high rates, that person might think twice before purchasing a new computer and perhaps make his or her old computer last longer (Kahn, 2003). Again considering gang violence, if we learned that one of the causes of gang violence was gang members

needing to feel a sense of power, we might try to provide youth without a way to experience power and accomplishment with a healthier outlet to experience power and accomplishment. When we do not understand why something happened, we tend to assume that it is beyond our capabilities to understand it or to do anything about it. However, the more we reflect upon the world around us and how it relates to our experiences, the more able we are to grow as individuals and affect change as an outcome of the learning process (Adams, 1997, p. 33). Even if we choose not to act upon this knowledge, we can at least know that we have the power to make a difference instead of helplessly watching as the world haphazardly unfolds before us, robbing us of more and more of the things that make our lives fulfilling.

When children are given choices and allowed to think for themselves, their concept of self improves and they consequently feel capable (Fay & Funk, 1995). The way in which curricula that asks the question "why?" and motivates students to act is important. Many people watch television, read the newspaper, listen to a friend, or listen to a teacher and accept it as the truth without question. However, since all information sources are biased, it is very important that students begin to develop critical thinking skills with which to interpret these sources of information. Teachers should guide their students to ask questions such as, "Do I believe this?," "Does this information coincide with what I already know?," "Does this information coincide with what I have observed in the world?," and "Do I trust the information sources?" Such questions asked about current and historical events form the basis of students being able to interpret the world and allow them to form their own opinions about it. When students are answering the question of "why?" for themselves, they feel capable of understanding the world around them and

"If teachers help students to better understand certain issues, they may be able to start connecting them to their lives, thinking about them critically, and discussing them with their friends, families, and communities."

comparing and adjusting their beliefs to coincide with new information that is presented to them. The classroom environment should be one that respects and values the opinions of all students so that they become critical thinkers capable of affecting change in their communities.

ENCOURAGE COMMUNITY AND POLITICAL ACTIVISM

Within a classroom that respects and values the opinions of all students, gives them hope, and helps them to feel capable or empowered, there is an opportunity for harnessing that feeling of empowerment into action. If students are upset about something, teachers will be doing them a wonderful service by allowing them to do something about it within the classroom structure. Students are often capable of creating brilliant solutions to problems that they see, however for these solutions to be as effective as possible they should be solutions students have created from problems with which they are directly concerned. This said, most topics can be related to students' lives if framed in the correct light. For example a story told from the point of view of a child living in a country in which war is taking place can make war relatable to American students. Such stories combined with the opportunity for children to think critically about them and act upon them if they feel so inclined are an incredible way to incite activism (Marriott, 2003). Class discussions, letter writing campaigns, and organizing and participating in protests are examples of activities that teachers can offer as an outlet for students who wish to act on an issue brought up in class or elsewhere in their lives.

Projects with more tangible results may be more effective for younger students who may not be able to comprehend the effect they are having on issues such as a distant war, which points to the need for community activism with doable and realizable results (Zeller, 1993). Examples of such projects often present themselves in class as students bring up their concerns about what is happening in their communities, but to give some general examples, I would like to use (1) peace protests and (2) school gardens. (1) Students at an elementary school in Tucson, Arizo-

na, who were frightened by and fed up with riots that broke out across the street at Tucson High School, protested these riots by marching around the high school with a mega-phone and banners. Due to their efforts the riots at the high school drastically subsided (Rusch, 2002). (2) School gardens have been successful not only as a way to give students a feeling of pride and accomplishment when they are able to grow their own food, but can also be seen as a political act when related to America's over reliance on petroleum for transporting commercially grown food long distances, the harmful nature of chemical pesticides and fertilizers used in commercial agriculture, and the deplorable conditions under which farm workers work (Kingsolver, 2002). Students who are being politically active in school not only achieve results while in school, but these students will carry their activism with them into their adult lives to go on to continue to make a difference in their communities and worldwide (Lakes, 1996).

CONCLUSION

Teachers can no longer see aiding students in pursuit of individual wealth as a solution to the problems in inner-cities. As there are not enough resources in the world for all people to live even at the consumption levels of some of the poorest Americans, it is much more effective to pursue common goals (Muilerman & Blonk, 2001). Teachers can encourage the betterment of inner-city areas of poverty by reducing divisions between ethnic and other groups, creating a sense of belonging to a community, using a curriculum that gives hope and empowers students through the encouragement of critical thinking, and encouraging community and political activism. They can also serve as role models to students by conducting their classes and their lives in a way they view as positive. Children who do not have many supportive adult role models in their lives, are particularly affected by adults in their lives who care about them. I hope that teachers recognize the powerful position they occupy and give thought to the curricula and teaching methods they use so as to achieve their fullest potential in improving their students' lives and communities.

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Art Collage by Daniela Steinsapir Stitchkin

“Digital photography is my main tool to collect imagery. Thorough observation, registration, digital intervention and digital construction constitute the foundation of my virtual architecture or ‘virtual urban landscape’. The idea of establishing new dialogues between foreground and background, or ‘model’ and ‘landscape,’ is to determine the true value of portraiture in its capability to represent and to evaluate human nature. Our relationships to an imaginary world are the key elements to my research. Visualizing the idea of ‘costumes of society’ vis-à-vis ‘costumes of parties’ allows me to reflect on the boundaries between reality and fantasy.”

-Daniela Steinsapir Stitchkin

An Interview with BART Director Tom Radulovich

Jeremy Brittan

Tom Radulovich is a Bay Area transit advocate who was elected to the BART Board of Directors (District 9) in November 1996. In addition to his work with BART, his recent focus has been the campaign for Proposition K, the transportation measure on SF's 2003 ballot, which passed by a considerable margin. I met with Tom to get the scoop on what Prop K will mean for Bay Area transit riders in the coming years, as well as find out about what's on the agenda for BART and MUNI.

As a Maxell cassette was consuming this interview, I was taking in some Earl Grey tea in a modestly furnished Victorian down the street from Dolores Park...

Brittan: Well, the results are in and I know you must be pleased. Please help me understand: what exactly is Prop K, and what will it mean in terms of Bay Area transportation projects?

Radulovich: Well, maybe I'll start with the background. We've just renewed our half-cent sales tax for transportation; we passed the original tax back in 1989. Mostly it funded maintenance of the existing systems: replacement of all the MUNI vehicles (which has been accomplished in the last fifteen years), a lot of local streets and roads funding, as well as a lot of programs that were neither transit nor streets and roads. There was a bike program that was funded in the original, Prop B, as well as the Transit Preferential Streets Program, which altered streets in order to accommodate faster bus travel. So, with Prop K we've just renewed the tax and extended it out for thirty more years. Basically city planners will be building on plans that would have been funded under Prop B...now there's more money

for street trees; the bike program (\$50 million, even more than under the previous tax. This will go towards converting off-street parking into bike lanes and building new parking racks, as well as bike safety programs); MUNI maintenance and rehabilitation; road maintenance.

Prop K has a few advantages over Prop B. First of all, it's multimodal; it's looking at ALL of the modes that affect San Francisco including BART and Caltrain, and ferries. It will also fund some new programs, things that weren't really on the planning horizon in 1989, but have since become things the city wants to do:

One idea is Bus Rapid Transit (BRT), the idea that you can have "Light Rail" levels of service by giving buses their own right of way. BRT's have a different design. This is something pioneered by cities like Curitiba, Brazil and Ottawa, Canada. It's become very popular in transit circles.

Brittan: So does "Light Rail" level of service mean that the buses come more frequently, or that the vehicles have more space than a regular bus...

Radulovich: The terminology is not precise. Generally speaking, BRT equals a bus that operates in its own right of way:

It's got an exclusive lane.

Often times it gets traffic signal priority along the BRT corridor to facilitate vehicle movement at intersections. The system will assign a priority, by intersection and by time of day, to the signal that will provide either an "early" green light or an "extended" green light to the BRT vehicle.

BRT also has a greater frequency of vehicles, sometimes one every five minutes or so.

There's another idea called Rapid Bus, which has traffic signal preempts but not an exclusive lane, so they operate in mixed traffic. Los Angeles has a Rapid Bus program on Ventura blvd./Wilshire which has been very successful. Rapid Bus usually has less frequent stops, which is similar to Light Rail spacing...say, a stop every half-mile or quarter-mile, rather than every block which seems to be the norm in San Francisco...

Brittan: Yeah, why is that? I've heard that MUNI buses have about twice as many stops as the national average. Is it due to the hilly terrain, or are people in San Francisco just lazy, or what?

Radulovich: (laughs) Well, it's just been MUNI's historic pattern...I think MUNI knows, in its heart of hearts, that there are too many stops...they could put one on every other block and people still wouldn't have to walk more than a block, theoretically. However, whenever eliminating a stop is proposed, they have to have a hearing, somebody complains, and it's a disaster. That's what the staff says, anyway. On the other hand, they did have a detailed program a few years back that eliminated quite a few stops from some of the lines, which helps move the buses along. They've also been making the adjustment to "Far Side Stops": moving a bus through a traffic light before it makes a stop, which is also good for relieving congestion. They've run out of funding for some of these improvements, but they're good ideas, and hopefully Prop K will continue to push MUNI in that direction.

Brittan: Tell me about the group you're involved

with, Rescue MUNI.

Radulovich: Rescue MUNI is a rider advocate group; they were founded a number of years back, when MUNI was experiencing service meltdowns. Rescue MUNI was really a driving force behind Prop E back in 1997. It was a reform measure that helped to set up a Municipal Transportation Agency (MTA) board, in an attempt to "de-politicize" MUNI...until then, a MUNI employee's job was largely at the mercy of the mayor. It also merged MUNI with the Department of Parking and Traffic...one of the main problems

is that 95% of MUNI's vehicles do not have their own right of way, they're operating in mixed traffic. The merger was in hopes that the DPT would prioritize the movement of transit vehicles and not just the movement of cars.

Brittan: So would you say that MUNI has top priority at this point, or is San Francisco still in a transition period?

Radulovich: Historically, it has not been, even though the city supposedly has a "transit first" policy, which was first implemented back in the 1980's. In practice, the DPT has favored automobiles. So, the merger under Prop E was basically to reinforce the policy of the city itself, and to make sure that the DPT was taking the necessary steps to make this happen. Hopefully Prop K will do even more to ensure that San Francisco residents will have the option of BRT's (which in theory will move people faster than automobiles) or an improved Caltrain system that would be similar to BART—electrically run, with a new downtown extension, and with trains that arrive at a rapid transit level of frequency, with diesel fuel...

Another thing that obviously ties in with all of this is housing. In order to meet the city's housing



Photo courtesy of BART

needs, probably another thirty to forty thousand units are going to be necessary in the next decade or so. Ideally, these units will be within easy access to transit, and there are several strategies to ensure that.

One way is to have extensive redevelopment centered around existing transit, like we're seeing at Balboa Park, Octavia and Market, the Central Waterfront (which will have service on the new Third Street light rail line), and Geary Blvd. Currently they've been rezoning in order to permit construction of new housing in these areas. By channeling growth into these transit corridors, we can increase the population of San Francisco without increasing vehicle congestion.

Brittan: So tell me what's going on with BART right now, what can we expect to see in the coming years?

Radulovich: Well, we've got a lot of stuff going on. There's the seismic retrofit program, which is the biggest priority in terms of keeping the system running. We're going to need a billion and a half dollars in order to make the necessary improvements (part of which will be funded by the one dollar increase on the Bay Bridge toll). The idea is to promote safety standards, which is obviously the priority, but we also need to ensure operating standards. As we found after the 1989 earthquake, BART is a real lifeline for the region. We want to be up and running within a few hours of a quake, we can't have weeks or months delay before being able to reopen.

Brittan: Is that what happened in the '89 quake?

Radulovich: Actually in the '89 quake we did quite well, we were running trains within a few hours, which was quite good for the region since the Bay Bridge was out of commission. For about a month, BART was the link between San Francisco and the East Bay, and we want to do that again if we need to. The '89 quake was actu-

ally smaller and further south than we might expect, so it's really important for BART to ensure its own operability.

In terms of our planning horizons, we're looking at what we're going to need when ridership starts growing again, we need to plan ahead for the possibility of increasing capacity in order to carry additional numbers of people. Right now we carry an average of 300,000 people per weekday... well, we've got to think ahead to when we've got, say, half a million riders per day. It means more

rail cars, expanding our existing stations, expanding the capacity of the trains themselves, etc. As we, as a region, begin shifting our focus away from the urban fringes and back into center city, BART becomes essential as a strategy that looks more at infill and less at sprawl.

We have an ongoing joint development program that's looking at building on BART parking lots in order to create transit villages with housing, retail, and office space all together in a dense, walkable environment around our stations. We're go-

ing to complete a transit village at Fruitvale by the end of the year. Hayward has come pretty far: they've got a City Hall and a library that were built on a former BART parking lot. We're advertising for proposals for Walnut Creek, West Oakland, Macarthur Station, and Union City.

The project that will extend BART's service to San Jose is facing some serious setbacks due to the state's budget crisis. The Valley Transit Authority in that region is having some trouble allocating the sales tax revenue that they were planning on using, so for now the extension has been put on hold.

In Alameda County under Prop B, BART has received the necessary funding to construct a "people mover" from the Coliseum station along Hegenburger Road to the Oakland Airport. It's an electric train that runs without a driver on

“One of the main problems is that 95% of MUNI’s vehicles do not have their own right of way, they’re operating in mixed traffic.”

-Tom Radulovich

rubber tires, like what we have over at the San Francisco Airport. The city of Oakland wants to do some development along the Hegenburger Corridor, maybe a stop or two where people would be able to get on and off the train.

Brittan: Hopefully that would encourage some development along Hegenburger. As it stands, there isn't much of a reason to hang out around there unless you want to check out some drive-through fast food restaurant or go stare at a factory...

Radulovich: That's what the city is hoping. They already had a plan for the corridor that fell through, but hopefully, if the economy turns around, they'll be able to find the funding to make the area more attractive. Hopefully the new connection will be a catalyst for some new development.

Transit Oriented Development (TOD) is good for BART because it increases transit ridership, and also because we get money for leasing out the land to different companies. The nice thing about leasing is that it's a stable source of long-term revenue. The main other ways BART gets money is from the fare box and from sales tax revenue, both of which are pretty volatile in a bad economy.

TOD regulations are something that from now on we will be requiring of communities who want to see a BART station constructed. Basically, we want the land rezoned before we even come in, for uses that will be compatible for transit. What we're pushing for is mixed use neighborhoods that are walkable and fun to visit, and not just big parking lots that can only be navigated by car, or Big Box retail plazas...hopefully those days are over. We'll see. Unfortunately, a lot of our newest extensions have ended up near freeways and areas that people don't really want to live near or hang out in. Our most successful stations have always been in downtown areas, where a variety of services are available. A lot of the suburban stations built in the 90's are very auto dependant; often times there isn't sufficient access to bus routes, bike paths...a lot of these areas don't even have sidewalks! We're hoping

BART can use some of the leverage we already have to promote these new agendas.

Brittan: I've noticed that BART has become a lot more bike friendly in recent years. What kinds of changes have taken place in order to accommodate people who bike to work?

Radulovich: Yeah, there's an access master plan for bikes. One of the first things we did after I joined the board was to get rid of bike passes. You used to be required to have a special ticket to bring a bike into a station; those were stupid. There was also a three hour window in each direction where you couldn't commute with a bicycle, and we shortened that to an hour, so biking to work became more of an option. The other major recent accomplishment has been the increased bike parking options. We now have both on-demand parking ("wobble racks") as well as the lockers. The lockers are for people who bike to the same station every day; they pay a monthly fee and are given access to a metal locker to put their bikes in.

Brittan: Out of curiosity, how much are those? More importantly, how does the cost of a locker compare to the price of an auto parking space at a station?

Radulovich: In every case the locker is cheaper per year than a parking space is per month. The bike parking is around thirty dollars a year, whereas parking your car can cost over a hundred dollars a month at certain stations.

Brittan: How is the parking permit system panning out? Has it been good for raising money for BART?

Radulovich: Well, we implemented parking charges not when we should have, which was when the economy was booming. The other thing – I think we should be charging for all parking, not just the 25% of "reserve spaces like we do now. Why would people pay for parking when at most stations they can get it for free? Eventually, we had to reduce the cost at many stations because the demand just wasn't there. A few stations raised the price because everyone wanted

parking, but...I don't like it because it creates two tiers of parking. You've got folks with top spaces and then others who have to show up early and hunt for a spot...we ought to just charge for all of it. The whole thing is dependant on creating a lack of space. We shouldn't be in the business of creating parking shortages, we should be in the business of managing parking, so that we can optimize both the ridership and the revenue. It works against both of those things, but it was the compromise that we did because the suburban directors liked it.

Brittan: So, does it seem like there's been a shift among developers to want to build near BART? It seems as though suddenly there's a big rush to have shopping and housing as close as possible to the stations.

Radulovich: For decades after BART opened in 1972, the majority of development growth in the three county BART region occurred away from the stations. It's not because of an impediment that BART put on these areas, it was just the typical pattern of edge city growth. It was fashionable for office structures to pop up in places like Fisher Branch, Hacienda Business Park (in Pleasanton), and all of these other places where our trains didn't go. That had a lot to do with county zoning policies, as well as the fact that all these new freeways had just been built. What we saw in the 1990's boom was a huge increase in congestion, which led to a lot more growth in the downtown areas, specifically those equipped with stations. So yeah, as we see even more congestion in the region, developers are going to want to locate near transit. With BART, developers see that they have access to two large downtown regions (three when the San Jose extension goes through), two international airports (again, three when San Jose becomes connected). As congestion increases, the focus will be on faster access, and that's certainly the future. We're not there yet – there's still a lot of office development going up away from transit, but definitely, there's a shift in place.

The other thing is that new laws are going to make it increasingly difficult to build along the urban fringe. More and more counties around

the Bay have been clamping down on greenfield developments (sites in areas without a previous history of development), so we're going to have to go back to the urban areas and reusing existing structures – brownfield (industrial sites which have been abandoned, like old factories) and greyfield sites (redevelopment of old strip malls and shopping centers). It's going to become a lot more cost efficient for developers to reuse old industrial sites, abandoned malls, unused parking lots, etc., and tearing them up in order to create new housing and transit villages. There are still a lot of impediments to doing that. There's local zoning, which often doesn't favor density. There are battles with NIMBY's ("Not in My Backyard," a statement characteristic of those who argue against any type of new development). Also, there are issues with toxins at a lot of the brownfield sites, industrial waste left behind that makes it especially hard to put housing in. So, in terms of convenience, it's often still a lot easier to build on the greenfield sites.

In last year's reports the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) painted a pretty dismal picture of the projected growth for the next ten or twenty years. If we continue to follow the current pattern, most of our growth will be along the urban fringe. As the Bay Area cracks down on urban sprawl, more and more development could be channeled into surrounding counties – San Juaqin, Selinas, and Monterey. This would mean that our housing and employment problems would only intensify.

Going after higher density in San Francisco and its suburbs is hard. The existing residents are often convinced that a population increase will make life harder. But the smart growth planning that's being done today indicates the opposite. Higher density is more likely to result in shorter commutes, less loss of Greenfield land, less pollution, and a better balance of jobs and housing within the neighborhood. The real challenge is convincing local governments that that's the case.

Brittan: What are some of the things that most people can do in order to ensure that their neighborhoods remain livable? How can people keep

their local policymakers focused on creating better transportation options?

Radulovich: Well, you should think long and hard about why you live where you do, or where you might relocate if it's not working. Why move to a place like Tracy when you can live in a place like Oakland? Move back into the core city if you can.

There's a group in San Francisco called The Organizing Project, it's a group of religious activists, an organization of churches, and they have a real housing focus. They have a campaign called YIMBY – Yes In My Backyard! Believe it or not they are actually trying to organize folks who will say, "Yeah, we want new housing in our community."

One of the things that's always most helpful is community planning. If residents know that infrastructure necessary to support the new residents is coming with the new residents, then it makes it easier to accept these new people. It's also good for having a neighborhood discussion about exactly where growth can occur. What we found in Balboa Park was people who said, "Leave our existing residential areas alone, but on the commercial streets where we have a lot of parking lots and one-story buildings...sure. Go ahead and build new apartments on top of those shops." They told us to build around the transit station which was kind of a no-man's land, it was deserted. So they encouraged us to build inwards, try to make a village, make the station the center of town. So I think when residents feel like they have a little bit more control over the growth process – where it goes, what it looks like, and what its character will be - they tend to be more supportive. One of the other things we see a lot is that residents have concern about the design of a building, so

they argue down its height, or developers won't make adjustments, so the design stays bad. We've seen that time and time again here in San Francisco. In the best case scenario, the community gets together and agrees that we want new units and we want new development. What we don't want is bad design, and we don't want a lot of new cars.

Of course if people don't want to depend on cars, then it's important to lobby for transit. Make sure that services get the upgrades they need.

Make sure you have pedestrian and biking infrastructure. One of the things I hate most in the world is when you have to push a button to cross the street. Since when is the pedestrian a second class citizen? People should lobby their employers to make sure that there are things like commuter check programs. If your employer is giving free parking to the folks who drive but nothing to the people who ride transit, they should offer some sort of reimbursement for your travel costs.

In Glen Park we saw a very vocal group who knew that there was a housing shortage and knew that the best place for development was near the BART station. They started to speak out, against the equally vocal no-growth members of the community, and it was good for us to be able to hear the dialogue from both sides of the argument. So BART asked, well, should there be no growth in Glen Park? The answer to that was "no", so the real question became, where should the development go and what should its character be? It was a better conversation to have, and it ended up being a lot more productive.

“I think when residents feel like they have a little bit more control over the growth process – where it goes, what it looks like, and what its character will be - they tend to be more supportive.”

-Tom Radulovich



Photo courtesy of U.S. Department of Transportation

Frutivale Transit Village

Fruitvale Transit Village: A National Model

Dion Good

INTRODUCTION

The Fruitvale Transit Village is an exciting new mixed-use¹ transit-oriented² development on a 9-acre, former BART³ parking lot at the Fruitvale station (one of the system's busiest) in Oakland, California. The goal of the project is broad: to revitalize the Fruitvale commercial district through a dual strategy of creating a sense of place and linking that place more effectively with the rest of the Bay Area by BART and AC Transit⁴. AC Transit is concurrently implementing a new BRT⁵ route along International Blvd, which runs nearby.

Phase one of the project will consist of 39,000 square feet of commercial retail space, a child-care facility, a senior center, a health clinic, a public library, a computer technology center, a police substation, 47 apartments, and a pedestrian plaza. The second phase will contain 200 housing units and 35,000 square feet of commercial retail space or community facilities (FDC, 2003). The total cost will be \$89 million.

The combination of mixed-use spaces and transit orientation will create a compact land-use pattern that will have a beneficial effect on the traffic circulation and the creation of a sense of place within the city. The station will serve to draw people from both inside and outside the community to shop, dine, and enjoy the area, and help reduce crime by creating a 24-hr residential on-site presence. The project is coordinated with the Fruitvale Main Street Program, a comprehensive business assistance and improvement program of the entire Fruitvale commercial district (Unity Council, 2003). The keys to the success of the project are effective partnering, securing creative financing, and encouraging grassroots public involvement. The Village is an

example of what can be achieved when these innovative development strategies are used. As a result, the Village has become a national model for transit-oriented development (FTA 2002).

HISTORY AND BACKGROUND

The Fruitvale area is located mostly in City Council District 5, historically one of the most vital and prosperous communities in Oakland, practically a second downtown (FHWA, 2003). Until 1909 it was a separate town, then spelled Fruit Vale (Alameda County Health Services Agency 2001; Bagwell 1982). Economic decline set in since the construction of freeways in the late 1950s and early 1960s made it possible for businesses to relocate on cheaper land in the suburbs. Despite a number of failed revitalization plans in the 1970s-80s, the area still holds promise for investors. It is the most densely populated area of Oakland (City of Oakland, 2003); its eight census tracts contained a population of 55,722 in 2000 (Alameda County Health Services Agency, 2001) in an area of about 3 square miles.

It was against this backdrop of historic vitality and recent disinvestment that the idea for the transit village came about. In June 1991 BART proposed building a 500-space, multi-level parking garage on its existing lot at the Fruitvale station. The community, however, led by the Spanish Speaking Unity Council, a non-profit community development organization founded in 1964, opposed the plan on the grounds that the structure would worsen crime, blight, and traffic, decrease air quality, and further isolate the station from the community (FHWA, 2003). In response to this opposition, BART held a series of meetings with the Unity Council and the community in which alternative plans were discussed. Out of these meetings sprang the idea for the Transit Village.

The Unity Council was awarded a \$185,000 community development block grant by the City of Oakland in February 1992 and a \$470,000 planning grant from the Federal Transportation Administration (FTA) in April 1993. In May 1993 a design symposium was held at the UC Berkeley National Transit Access Center (UC NTRAC) in which design ideas were translated into plans by five Bay Area architectural firms. McLarand, Vasquez, Emsiek & Partners were awarded the contract. In the spring and summer of 1995 consensus was reached on planning goals, community preferences, and a specific site plan, during three community planning workshops. The Unity Council began seeking both public and private investors in 1993, the largest being Citibank (FDC, 2003). Ground breaking for the first phase of the project occurred in September 1999.

GENERAL PLAN AND ZONING CONTEXT

Transit-oriented, mixed-use development is a major policy of the City of Oakland's General Plan Land Use and Transportation Element (approved 1998, effective until 2015). One of its seven Transportation Policy Objectives is "integration of land use and transportation planning by developing transit-oriented development."

Transit-oriented districts are included in Oakland's General Plan Preamble as one of the types of places that make Oakland work. These types of places also include showcase districts, city corridors, neighborhoods, and activity centers. There are eight BART stations in Oakland and transit village projects are currently being proposed, planned, or implemented around all of them, including Fruitvale (CEDA 2003).

OVERCOMING OBSTACLES

Most of the obstacles to the project were derived from BART's ownership of the land around the station and its policies regarding development of

that land. Effective partnering between the Unity Council, the City of Oakland, and BART, who all signed a Memorandum of Understanding in 1994, greatly smoothed the process.

BART's policies encourage development next to its stations, but require that 1) a competitive bidding process be undertaken, 2) the value of their land holdings around the stations must be maintained, and 3) any development on station land must not result in a net loss of parking spaces. In 1996 BART was able to award sole development rights to the Unity Council by claiming "best interest." In return, the Unity Council secured a \$7.3 million FTA grant for the construction of

“Transit-oriented, mixed-use development is a major policy of the City of Oakland's General Plan Land Use and Transportation Element.”

a replacement parking garage for BART on a parcel of Union Pacific land on the other side of the station. The City then rezoned the area for transit-oriented development (S-15), at the request of the Unity Council, effectively limiting new parking space construction in a quarter-mile radius around the Village, in order to preserve its pedestrian character. The zoning density was set at 125 units per acre maximum, and the land-use was classified as a "corridor mixed-use neighborhood center". In 1998 BART

agreed to lease the land at fair market value to the Fruitvale Development Corporation for 96 years. In exchange, BART received several other nearby parcels owned by both the Unity Council and the City, thereby retaining the value of their holdings around the station.

Meanwhile, a critical mass of new development was needed before private investors would risk investing in the project (Bernick & Servero 1997, p.209). Arabella Martinez, the CEO of the Unity Council, collected an impressive list of federal and foundation grants, which eventually warmed private investors to the project. The largest single investor was Citibank, which backed \$27 million in municipal bonds (FDC 2003, Citigroup 2002).

ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

Because the Village was proposed as an alternative land use to BART's original parking garage proposal, and because it was developed with community input and with partnership between the Unity Council, City and BART, it enjoys near universal support. Only a few business owners on International Boulevard are worried that the Village might siphon away business (Sarker 2003).

The Village addresses social justice concerns; affordable housing, community services, and public safety. Twenty percent of the project's housing units will be priced at 80% market rate, although the total number of units is limited by a building height restriction of 55 feet, which serves to maintain a village scale. The fact that the Village will contain not just commercial spaces but public services such as a health clinic, a senior center, a child care center, and a public library is crucial to community support.

The expected increase in traffic and congestion once the project is completed raised concerns about public safety, and led to the installation of traffic calming measures such as narrowing the East 12th Street right-of-way, installing a wide paved crosswalk between the 34th Street Pedestrian Mall and the Village Plaza, and installing traffic lights at key intersections (Map 2). The rerouting of all ten AC Transit bus lines that terminate at the station also necessitated the installation of traffic lights along San Leandro Street.

However, one particular land-use was controversially forced out of the area to make room for the Village. Casa Segura was a much needed needle exchange, counseling, and medical center, located directly across the street from the proposed Village. The HIV infection rate among Latinos in Alameda County doubled in 1998-99. Fruitvale is 46% Latino. The center was exchanging 7,000-10,000 needles per week.

However, needle exchange is antithetical to re-

development. District 5 Council Member Ignacio De La Fuente made it clear that he want Casa Segura not only out of Fruitvale, but out of his district. Due to its limited budget, Casa Segura had trouble finding a new location, and in 2000 it moved three blocks away—to a location on San Leandro Blvd, just on the other side of the Village. According to LoMonaco (2002), "The move infuriated De La Fuente." Soon thereafter, police harassment increased, and on New Years Eve, 2000, Casa Segura was burnt down. Police investigators called it arson. Some of the Casa Segura staff members and patrons suspect that De La Fuente might have been behind it (LoMonaco 2002).

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

The Initial Review and Environmental Assessment was done by Environmental Science Associates, a California-based environmental consulting firm. The key mitigation issues identified were: traffic and circulation, air quality, noise and vibration, and hazardous materials. The traffic, air quality, noise, and vibration concerns were mitigated by the zoning ordinance passed by the City in 1996 limiting the construction of new parking spaces in the Village area. This is expected to cut down on traffic, and therefore noise, vibration, and air pollution. Ultimately the project passed initial review and was given a finding of Mitigated Negative Declaration under CEQA and No Significant Effect under NEPA.

RECENT ZONING AND LAND USE CHANGES

The zoning code is still in the process of being updated to conform to the general plan. An October 15, 2003 Oakland Planning Commission Staff Report recommended changing the zoning surrounding the Village from a special Transit-Oriented Development (S-15) zone to a new Transit-Oriented Development Mixed-Use (TOD) zone. The change sets additional planning standards (City of Oakland Planning Commission Staff Report, 2003):

- A Conditional Use Permit requirement for housing on the ground floor

- Restrictions on the size of grocery (60K sq ft) and retail stores (30K sq ft)
- A minimum density requirement
- An increased conditionally permitted mixed-use density (157 units/acre)
- A conditionally permitted maximum height of 90 ft (existing max is 55 ft)
- Design review criteria for all new developments
- Restrictions on the construction of single family homes and duplexes
- A maximum parking provision
- Explicitly permitting BART to construct parking facilities to serve the station, as long as it replaces an at-grade lot and contains a significant amount of commercial and residential facilities.

The staff also recommended changing the General Plan Land Use Classification for a single parcel across the street from the southeast corner of the Second Phase area of the project from Mixed-Housing Type Residential to Neighborhood Center Mixed Use, in order to make the land-use designations consistent. This will allow additional permitted uses on that parcel. An elementary school currently occupies the site. The Community Economic Development Agency approved the recommendation on October 28, 2003, and the City Council approved it 7-0 (De La Fuente excused) on December 2nd. Much of the wording of the new ordinance was concerned with the paid parking allowance granted to BART (City of Oakland, 2003).

ANALYSIS

The Fruitvale Transit Village has as its goals two processes, economic revitalization and community building, and they are not always compatible. Economic revitalization will bring more traffic and activity to the area, drive up land values, and increase pressure for gentrification and the construction of more parking spaces. Commu-

nity building, however, places a de facto constraint on growth by limiting parking and building height through zoning, which helps preserve a village feel. Buildings within the project itself are approximately the same height as those along International Boulevard; thus the project blends well into the existing urban fabric.

While the constraint to growth seems antithetical to business, which depends, in part, on auto-shoppers, it must be remembered that the vitality of the area does not depend solely on the Village. International Blvd, the real life-blood of the community, is only a block away. The Village is really a link between the BART station and the Boulevard.

The presence of on-site housing will create a 24-hour "eyes-on-the-street" situation which, in combination with the placement of a police sub-station either in the project or nearby, is expected to have a drastic effect on the perception of safety in the area. This in turn will generate more foot-traffic, and promote the image of the Village as a trendy place. Yet, the relative scarcity of parking and the presence of a certain percentage of on-site affordable housing, will ensure a permanent mixed-class of residents, and should help guard against gentrification.

Construction of the first phase was completed in early 2004. The Grand Opening is scheduled for this spring (Unity Council 2003). The design process for the second phase is already underway. The addition of 200 more units and 35,000 square feet of retail/office space should complete the transformation of the Village area from a dangerous no-man's land of parking lots back into a semblance of its former self—a bustling urban center. It is Fruitvale's legacy of prosperity and vitality prior to the construction of freeways in the 1950s and early 60s that made it possible for the Unity Council to galvanize local opposition to the plan. Without this shared connection to a brighter past, it is questionable whether Fruitvale's residents would have cared much at all about more parking at the station.

NOTES

1 Transit-oriented refers to the development being within a walkable distance (usually 10 minutes) of a mass-transit hub such as a commuter- or light-rail station or bus terminal, with limited parking.

2 Mixed-use refers to the integration of commercial, office, and residential spaces in a single development.

3 Bay Area Rapid Transit--a 4-county regional transit district

4 Alameda-Contra Costa Transit

5 Bus Rapid Transit--a system with elements similar to light rail, such as low-floor vehicles, boarding platforms, proof-of-payment system, signal priority, and longer spacing (1/4--1/3 mile) between stops.

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Reflections on Development in Southern Chile

Sebastian Africano

Like sponges, the cities of the south have swelled to meet rising demands for space, comfort and commerce, and have expanded further and further into the expansive under-developed countryside.

At the gateway to Chilean Patagonia, three-quarters of the way to Antarctica along the spine of the Andes Mountains, monolithic hotels and oversized vacation homes mark the approach into the austral city of Puerto Varas. The volcanic peaks strewn about Southern Chile's Lakes Region provide a backdrop fit for any description of paradise, and command the attention of summer travelers as they zoom past the poor rural settlements which clutter the fringes of the colossal new highway. Gaps in prosperity run wide here – broad as the fallow fields left by the collapsed local dairy industry – and are well concealed by the steady influx of investment that floods into this otherwise sleepy region.

This growth spurt has come relatively recently to the Lakes Region of Chile – buttressed by burgeoning salmon farms and increased tourist travel to the region, and anchored by decades of fishing and timber sales. Like sponges, the cities of the south have swelled to meet rising demands for space, comfort and commerce, and have expanded further and further into the expansive, under-developed countryside. Puerto Montt, the premier port city of the South of Chile and neighbor by 25 km to smaller Puerto Varas, has been marked as one of the fastest growing urban centers in the nation. The aforementioned highway, to be built in eight 200km sections by various multinational developers, accommodates and further encourages this seemingly endless expansion by facilitating trade and motorized travel within the region. Billboards and advertisements litter the landscape.

Billboards and advertisements litter the landscape.

But as the cities grow, so do the shadows cast by the new buildings, bridges, and byways erected to serve them. The toll collectors at every exit of the highway don't discriminate between pinching the pockets of passers through and harvesting from those of the locals, who must travel these roads daily. Chain restaurants, convenience stores and corporate-

owned gas stations contracted to serve within the toll structures of the new highway smother the family restaurants, fuel stations, and truck stops that struggle to subsist along older thoroughfares. Rather than building the prosperity of the regions' communities, most of the revenue generated by this new wave of development disappears onto balance sheets calculated far from here, distant and oblivious to the clogged streets, soiled rivers, and dirty air left behind.

The equilibrium that exists between qualitative and quantitative development is shaky in this sparsely populated region of Latin America. To its credit, tourism creates a variety of jobs, consistent summer spikes in economic activity, and appreciation for the region's natural riches. But it also increases demand for timber from the receding Patagonian forests, pollutes the lakes and fisheries of the region, and shuffles municipal priorities toward gratifying summer vacationers. Salmon farming for export has proven to be an economic godsend to the country, providing direct and residual income to many. But a glut in the industry has congested and contaminated local waterways, prompting unprecedented algal blooms in the region's lakes, rivers and inlets, and has invited fleets of 18-wheelers to roar down narrow roads originally cut for light local traffic.

Yet the local populations seem, for the most part, content with the activity that stirs their quiet homeland. Like other peoples on the fringes of our rapidly advancing global society, their urge to modernize is overwhelmingly apparent and strangely justified. But the pace of development here is stunning, and is by no means sustainable – it will soon overburden the natural systems that have supported its trajectory thus far. All I can hope is that future development decisions are made with attention to preserving the social and ecological wealth of Southern Chile, making choices that regenerate, rather than degrade the unique beauty found in this remote corner of the planet.



Photo by Sebastian Africano

Book Review: *Global City Blues*

Elmer Tosta



Solomon, Daniel. *Global City Blues*. Washington, D.C.: Island Press, 2003.

When the word “blues” appears in a title, the first impression is that the content deals with despair, irresolvable problems, or a permanent condition from which there is no solution. Dan Solomon, architect, emeritus professor of architecture at the University of California, Berkeley, and co-founder of the Congress for the New Urbanism, in his book, *Global City Blues*, has packaged a series of situations, problems, and conditions that contradict the title. According to the author, some of these situations are resolvable, there are solutions and there is some hope. He takes the reader on a guided tour of urban areas throughout the world and through comparisons of these areas, suggests remedies to many of the problems. He refers to his home town, San Francisco, most frequently as examples of both

problems and solutions. Through Solomon’s descriptions, the reader can gain an enthusiasm for looking at the urban environment and recognizing some of the solutions to the ills of that environment. A parallel theme throughout the book is the inclusion of autobiographical sketches that tie the author’s global observations with San Francisco examples.

Solomon can be credited with practicing the concepts he writes about. The author’s own built projects demonstrate his sensitivity to the urban issues addressed in the book. His San Francisco built projects have graced neighborhoods, and in some cases have saved neighborhoods from the results of bureaucratic design processes that would have resulted in less than desirable results (Emancio Ergina in the Western Addition, for example). Town houses on Sacramento Street, Fulton Mews, and Biedeman demonstrate his reverence for placing buildings within the context of their surroundings and creating a street presence that is pleasant for neighbors and passers-by.

Each of the book’s seven sections is introduced by an essay that weaves a thread of continuity through the subsequent essays in that section. In Part I, “Nearness,” Solomon cites philosopher Martin Heidegger’s definition of “nearness” as a “fundamental relationship between our consciousness and the context of our lives” (2). The essays are linked by theme revolving around the senses of hearing, taste, and sight. In one essay titled “Peaches,” Solomon credits the renewed interest in eating close to the land as a theme that spread rapidly and was easily adapted by food enthusiasts all over America. To Solomon, the most important message was the quickness with which the message spread and the enthusiasm it generated. Why can’t the same en-

thusiasm be generated with regard to urban environments? Why does it take so long for change to be effected? The relationship between the taste of a real peach and land use, and how one depends upon the other and the quality of peachiness is in question. He points out that life will go on even though many will never taste a peach; however, a quality of life's experiences may disappear. Do urban dwellers know how good life can be? Do we know what we're missing? The complexities associated with peachiness are as complex as those which deal with delivering peaches to the urban metropolis.

In the third section, "Site versus Zeit," Solomon discusses Dutch architect Aldo van Eyck's concepts from 1950 of "place and occasion" versus Gideon's "space and time" by framing the debate around the perception of the Embarcadero Freeway. He places the argument within the context of the time and place of the freeway's inception and helps put the reader in the minds of those who defended its construction. Solomon compares the appreciation of the freeway when it was constructed to the appreciation of a Picasso in 1914 as something only those who were attuned to a "new" way of thinking in the modern times could appreciate. Those who criticized the freeway as destroying the vitality of neigh-

borhoods were just not in the "Zeit" and had not yet come around to an informed way of thinking. Solomon admits to having enjoyed the excitement of the Embarcadero Freeway and the rush of traveling past buildings in a car at 70 miles per hour (p.79). This reinforces the idea that none of us is immune to the power and seduction of speed and mobility in the automobile age and that it's very easy to fall in love with the technology that allows for speed. What separates Solomon from many others with these passions is his ability to see beyond the thrill of fast and convenient auto travel and see into the basic human need for urban spaces that are soul enriching rather than death defying.

When an architect puts pen to paper, (or, fingers on the keyboard) the results are sketches, renderings, and schematic drawings which lead to the resolution of design problems that are a reflection of an architect's training in problem resolution in three dimensions. Architect Dan Solomon has rendered images with carefully chosen words that are every bit as visual and three dimensional as presentation drawings. He doesn't blatantly provide solutions but lets them unfold as the reader takes this tour and experiences global city blues.



Cairean Diaries

Casondra Sobieralski

TRAFFIC AS CULTURAL MIRROR: FIRST IMPRESSIONS

There are no lanes on the highway.

Lines, but no lanes.

Drivers of cars, mopeds (no helmets required)

and donkey carts fringed with leafy greens

make up patterns as they go along,

become frenzied jazz notes

on an asphalt staff.

One way streets

connect and lure,

some paved some not, but always

the direction is either way

--at the same time.

And some how,

inconceivable to a Western mind,

it all seems to work just fine.

This stanza is an excerpt from an interactive, web based, nonlinear narrative. You can see the piece in its entirety at: http://userwww.sfsu.edu/%7Ecasondra/egypt_narrative_site/pages/

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